United Nations S/PV.4908

Security Council

Fifty-ninth year

Provisional

4908th meeting

Friday, 30 January 2004, 6.50 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Muñoz	(Chile)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Benin	Mr. Adechi
	Brazil	Mr. Valle
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Germany	Mr. Trautwein
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomson
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

04-22501 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 6.50 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2004/79, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Benin, Brazil, Chile, China, France, Germany, Pakistan, Philippines, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1526 (2004).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 6.55 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4909

Security Council

Fifty-ninth year

Provisional

4909th meeting

Wednesday, 4 February 2004, 11.15 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wang Guangya	(China)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Benin	Mr. Adechi
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	Chile	Mr. Maquieira
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Trautwein
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1514 (2003) of 13 November 2003 (S/2004/3)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

04-22949 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 11.15 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of February, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Heraldo Muñoz, Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of January 2004. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Muñoz for the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1514 (2003) of 13 November 2003 (S/2004/3)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Côte d'Ivoire, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Djangone-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire), took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire, document S/2004/3.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/2004/82, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Benin, Brazil, Chile, China, France, Germany, Pakistan, Philippines, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1527 (2004).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.4910

Security Council

Fifty-ninth year

Provisional

4910th meeting

Friday, 6 February 2004, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wang Guangya	(China)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Benin	Mr. Adechi
	Brazil	Mr. Valle
	Chile	Mr. Maquieira
	France	Mrs. D'Achon
	Germany	Mr. Trautwein
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	Spain	Ms. Menéndez
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2004/71)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

04-23161 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Expression of sympathy and condolences to the Government and the people of the Russian Federation in connection with the terrorist act in Moscow on 6 February 2004

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like at the outset to express on behalf of the Security Council our outrage at the terrorist attack that occurred earlier today in Moscow, killing at least 39 people and wounding many more. The Council condemns that act of terrorism in the strongest terms possible. The Council expresses its sympathy and condolences to the victims and their families and to the Government of the Russian Federation. On behalf of the Council, I should like to request the representative of the Russian Federation to convey these sentiments to his Government and his people.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2004/71)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Albania, Ireland and Serbia and Montenegro in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Perović (Serbia and Montenegro) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Nesho (Albania) and Mr. Ryan (Ireland) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Harri Holkeri, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Holkeri to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations. Members of the Council have before them document S/2004/71, containing the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Harri Holkeri, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). I now give him the floor.

Mr. Holkeri: Before I start my presentation, may I say that I was profoundly shocked and dismayed by the news of the terrorist attack this morning in Moscow. Having had experience in Northern Ireland and now in Kosovo, I am not new to the issue of extremism. I would like to express my deepest sympathies to my Russian colleague.

The week before last, I met with a delegation of families of missing Kosovo Albanians as many more stood vigil in the snow in front of the headquarters of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). They told me of their frustration at the slow progress on the return of the mortal remains of their loved ones from Serbia proper.

Similarly, I constantly hear about the grievances of the family members of missing Serbs who also want to know about the fate of their loved ones. Five years after the conflict, more than three quarters of the 3,566 people still missing are Kosovo Albanians, and nearly 18 per cent are Kosovo Serbs and Montenegrins. The remaining 4 per cent belong to other communities. Each side believes the authorities on the other side have information on the whereabouts of their loved ones. Both Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians demand that all those whose crimes resulted in the

disappearance of their loved ones, regardless of ethnicity, be brought to justice.

There must be faster progress to resolve this painful issue. One area where progress can be made is in the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. The issue of the missing is one of the four main practical issues that are supposed to be covered initially in the dialogue. The dialogue got off to a fitful start, due as much to disunity in the Kosovo Albanian camp as to the general preference of politicians in both Pristina and Belgrade to give precedence to domestic political issues. Four months after the launching of the dialogue at a plenary session in Vienna last October, the initial meetings of dialogue working groups might take place as early as February.

It is the responsibility of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, in cooperation with UNMIK, to actively and seriously engage without further delay in the direct dialogue with Belgrade. Dialogue constitutes a confidence-building measure as well as a demonstration of good will. The participants representing Pristina understand that the dialogue is a standard that must be fulfilled before Kosovo's future status can be resolved.

Through the dialogue, as well as through other channels, including possibly the High-Ranking Working Group, we also hope to be able to resolve long-standing disputes with Belgrade over parallel structures in Kosovo. Unfortunately, over the past few months, Belgrade has moved to extend and strengthen the presence of its parallel structures in Kosovo. Little is likely to change unless we respond to the challenge.

Another dialogue topic is the issue of returns, an issue about which the Council has regularly been informed. Suffice it to say that building on the gradual progress made in 2003 and on the substantial improvements in both the political climate and the operational framework for returns, prospects for returns in the coming year are encouraging. But as 2003 also demonstrated, the situation in Kosovo remains fragile, and those prospects must be nurtured in order to flourish.

Real movement on returns in 2004 will depend both on continuing improvement in the security and freedom of movement situation in Kosovo and on the extent to which the people and leaders of Kosovo dedicate themselves to working with the displaced to support sustainable returns. It will also depend upon the constructive position of the Belgrade authorities and the continuing commitment of the international community.

I want to mention another issue that is vital for progress in Kosovo. Privatization is moving forward in line with the guidance provided by the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs last November. I continue to discuss this crucial issue intensively with the Prime Minister and the Provisional Government. I intend that the procedures for the Kosovo Trust Agency should be improved. The privatization process is essential for economic growth in Kosovo; I am determined that it should continue.

With regard to financial irregularity and corruption, which emerge from time to time, I wish to assure the Council that UNMIK gives very serious attention to these matters. The recently promulgated Criminal Code, Criminal Procedure Code and Customs Code, as well as legislation being promulgated on the prevention of money-laundering and related criminal offences, will provide new tools for tackling economic and financial crime.

Various tools and mechanisms have been set up to conduct administrative inspections and financial investigations to identify fraud and corruption. The Auditor-General's Office is in place and is about to become operational. It will promote transparency and accountability in the management and performance of governance in Kosovo. An Investigation Task Force has recently been established, composed of representatives of the Financial Investigation Unit, the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services and the European Anti-Fraud Office. The European Union has provided valuable financial and other support for these important initiatives. I have repeatedly emphasized that there will be a policy of zero tolerance with regard to fraud, corruption and financial irregularities. With the new legislation and mechanisms, UNMIK is now well equipped to address the challenges that it faces in this field.

Significant progress has been made in the area of civil aviation, which will allow for a smooth transition to civilian control. With the assistance of the International Civil Aviation Organization, a Civil Aviation Regulatory Office has been established and a comprehensive legislative framework is being finalized to assure compliance with international civil aviation standards and practices. Iceland has graciously agreed

to support the United Nations by assuming, on UNMIK's behalf, certain essential civil aviation functions necessary for operations at Pristina airport. I signed an agreement in principle on this subject with Iceland last week.

I should like to refer briefly to the forthcoming Kosovo-wide elections. It is envisaged that they will be held in October this year. Preparations are well under way, with the help and under the leadership of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The implementation of standards is the core political project for UNMIK. I am determined that Kosovo should make progress on the standards, and I am confident that it will. We now have a clear political target, set out in the document "Standards for Kosovo", which I launched with the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Pristina on 10 December last year and which was subsequently endorsed by the Security Council. What we now need to do is to reach that target.

When I arrived in Kosovo in August, it was clear to me that UNMIK needed to turn over a new leaf in its relationship with the Provisional Institutions. There needed to be partnership, rather than imposition. Partnership is very much the philosophy of my approach with the Government on standards. The standards are for all of Kosovo. The Provisional Institutions should be in the lead, with UNMIK supporting them and ensuring that the process stays on track. Our most urgent task is to produce an implementation work plan, setting out clearly the actions necessary to reach the standards. In the working groups, where the Government and UNMIK are sitting side by side, we are working intensively to produce this work plan. It will set out in clear detail what actions need to be taken to reach the eight standards, who will take them and when these actions should take place.

This task is demanding and complex for UNMIK, and even more so for the Provisional Institutions. Production of the work plan requires consultations with many actors, both inside and outside Kosovo. This is the first time that a project like this has been undertaken in Kosovo, and it is a learning process for many of the ministers and officials involved. But it is well on its way. I hope that we shall very soon have a draft plan to present to the Council. I am sure that the Council would agree that it is more important to have a high-quality and effective work plan than to rush this crucial task.

I want to say an important word about Kosovo Serbs and their non-participation in this process. I am personally very disappointed that there continue to be no Serb representatives in the implementation working groups. My officials and I have met the coalition of Serb parties in Kosovo — the Coalition Return — on many occasions, including in the past few weeks and days. The purpose of our meetings was to underline to them that the best way for them to protect and promote their interests in Kosovo is to take part in the implementation process. The starting point is to take part in the production of the work plan.

Their principal concern — that the standards process is undermining resolution 1244 (1999) and prejudging future status — is wholly unfounded. Nor are they right to fear that their concerns and interests will be sidelined in the implementation process. UNMIK is there to ensure that the interests of all communities are fairly and fully represented. The Prime Minister has issued a clear invitation to them to participate in all the working groups.

It is clear that some representatives of the Serbs in Kosovo understand and accept these arguments and are willing to participate in the working groups. But they are looking to Belgrade to endorse that view. It does not help that there is still no government in Belgrade. I hope that the Council will strongly support my view that the best way forward for all communities in Kosovo is participation by all communities in the standards process.

The standards implementation process will go ahead as the Council has asked. Even as the implementation plan is under preparation, the real work — to turn the standards into reality — is already under way. UNMIK's focus on this task is intense. We are working with the Provisional Institutions to ensure that they too are similarly committed. For it is the commitment of Kosovo's leaders, in the Government and down to the municipalities, that is crucial to making progress.

In Kosovo, the President and the Prime Minister and his Government are working hard to implement the standards. But I am sorry to report that some politicians in Pristina are not demonstrating the wholehearted commitment that the Council and the international community are hoping for. I call on them

today to show that commitment, for those who are not part of the standards process are letting down the people of Kosovo and will play no part in Kosovo's march towards a better future, including in paving the way for the determination of future status.

The Council has now endorsed the mechanism for a review of progress on standards in mid-2005. That was the right decision. "Standards before status" needed a timetable. Kosovo's undetermined status helps no one in Kosovo, and it needs to be resolved sooner rather than later. It is my job to make sure that the Provisional Institutions make real progress on the implementation of the tough standards that have been set in the document, "Standards for Kosovo". The leaders of the Kosovo Institutions are determined to do so, and can count on my full support.

Members of the Council have received the report of the Secretary-General on UNMIK for the last quarter of 2003 (S/2004/71). It is a comprehensive account of the developments in Kosovo and the progress of the Mission in implementing its mandate under Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). It covers all major aspects of UNMIK's activities.

I should like to emphasize only one thing. Neither the Provisional Institutions nor UNMIK will be able to achieve the high goals that we have set out for Kosovo without the Council's robust and consistent political and material support. Only through such support will we be able to attain our common objective of a democratic, tolerant, multi-ethnic Kosovo that will be at peace with itself and with the rest of the region. To achieve that objective, progress on standards is essential. And that will require, above all, the hard work, leadership and commitment of the leaders and the people of Kosovo.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Holkeri for his briefing.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I should like to commence my statement by expressing Pakistan's complete condemnation of the horrible terrorist attack that occurred earlier today in Moscow, killing 39 people. We express our deep condolences to the bereaved families and to the Government and the people of the Russian Federation.

Since this is the first opportunity I have had to speak in a Council meeting during the current month, let me take this opportunity to express the happiness of Pakistan and my own happiness at seeing you, Sir, preside over the Council during the month of January. We are confident that, with your renowned diplomatic skill, you will guide us to success on the many important issues we will consider during your presidency. I also wish to express the high appreciation of the Pakistan delegation to Ambassador Muñoz for Chile's successful and busy presidency last month.

This morning, we should again like to welcome Mr. Holkeri, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, to the Security Council and to thank him for briefing us once again. We share the vision, which Mr. Holkeri expressed last December, of a better Kosovo,

> "a place where people are free to travel, use their own languages and work anywhere in Kosovo, a place where your ethnic identity — whether Albanian, Serb, Turk, Bosniak, Roma, Gorani, Ashkali, Egyptian or Croatian — has no effect on the way you are treated at work, in the street or in a court of law".

As a member of the Council and as a contributor of troops to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Pakistan will continue to support Mr. Holkeri in promoting the implementation of the provisions of resolution 1244 (1999).

We look forward to studying the work plan that UNMIK is drawing up for the implementation of the eight standards identified in the standards document. We take note, however, of the difficulties Mr. Holkeri is encountering in drawing up the work plan. It is as much in the interests of the Kosovo Serbs to participate in the working groups as it is in the interests of the Provisional Institutions to offer Mr. Holkeri its fullest cooperation on all issues. It is, in fact, in the interests of all sides to work towards the implementation of the standards document. Nevertheless, we urge Mr. Holkeri and UNMIK to find ways to expedite the drawing up of the work plan. It is too important to become a hostage to the intransigence of one side or the other. As Mr. Holkeri has himself warned, inaction could leave Kosovo a crippled society, perhaps for years to come.

While it is important to address all the eight standards, in our opinion the three key areas deserving urgent priority are the economy, the rule of law and sustainable returns and its connected issues: freedom of movement, the reintegration and return of refugees and displaced persons, and property rights. Freedom of

movement for individuals and the right to return in safety and dignity are basic rights of all refugees, and not just in Kosovo; they are rights that need to be addressed everywhere. Similarly, peace and development are indivisible. Peace cannot be sustained without sustained socio-economic development in Kosovo, as in similar situations. Finally, the rule of law is of particular importance for Kosovo, not only because of the violence associated with past ethnic aggression, but also because of the endemic transnational crime that continues to infect much of the Balkan region.

The issue of dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina remains central. We would strongly encourage such a dialogue. We welcome the willingness of the Provisional Institutions to move ahead in their area, and we look forward to the establishment of a new Government in Belgrade that will take up the offer. That will be a first step in building confidence between the two sides; it is, of course, an indispensable step to enable them to effectively address the difficult but important issue of status. The dismantling of parallel institutions, which continue to undermine peace and reconciliation in Kosovo, is also essential in the confidence-building process.

We look forward to the Kosovo elections in October, and we hope that all communities — in particular the Kosovo Serbs — will participate fully in that exercise.

Pakistan's reservations on the "standards before status" issue are well known. We do not wish that approach to become a precedent in similar situations in other parts of the world. While we agree that the United Nations Mission in Kosovo has a mandate to implement the "standards before status" policy, that should not preclude the Security Council's discussing the status issue and constructively approaching it with a view to finding a just and lasting solution. We should at least begin to do so before the May 2005 target date set by the standards document.

I should like to make one final observation. We have noted recent remarks — including those by Mr. Holkeri — to the effect that the future of Kosovo lies in the European family. We have no doubt that it does. But Kosovo does not belong to Europe alone; it has a culture and a history that extend beyond Europe. Therefore, the process of building peace and of fostering reconciliation and prosperity in Kosovo cannot become an exclusively European process. In particular, we urge both Mr. Holkeri and the Contact Group on Kosovo to work with the Organization of the Islamic Conference to ensure that the solution for Kosovo is a genuinely international solution, especially since Kosovo remains under United Nations transitional administration. The involvement of the maximum number of partners cannot but help to ensure that the process of peace, reconciliation and reconstruction will be a success.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Pakistan for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to congratulate you warmly, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to assure you of its cooperation. We would like also to congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Muñoz of Chile, who so ably and skilfully guided our work in January.

We listened very carefully to the very comprehensive statement made by Mr. Harri Holkeri on the report of the Secretary-General on the United National Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). It was indeed an excellent and very relevant statement. We would like here to pay well-deserved tribute to Mr. Holkeri and to his team for their firm commitment to discharging the responsibilities entrusted to UNMIK, whose work is proving particularly helpful in stabilizing the situation in Kosovo. His comprehensive and personal account has shown us clearly where significant progress has been made and has allowed us to identify those areas where less positive developments have taken place — areas that require effective improvements.

In that respect, the information provided makes clear the effectiveness of the review mechanism. We welcome the concrete steps that have been taken to support Kosovo as it works to establish functioning democratic institutions that would bring together all of the inhabitants of the province.

From that perspective, we would stress the importance of multi-ethnic representation and of inclusiveness, as well as the need to take account of the vital interests of minorities and to safeguard their cultural and identity rights.

The ongoing development of the domestic legal order in Kosovo through the adoption of new legislation is to be encouraged, as the goal is to establish the provincial administration on a very sound footing at the central and municipal levels, as part of decentralization. We believe that UNMIK should ensure that the established allocation of competencies is respected. Likewise, a sustained effort must be made to strengthen the apolitical nature of the Kosovo administration and to avoid the development of two parallel administrations in the province, due to Belgrade's continued support for Serb populations in many areas.

We take note of the progress made in establishing and strengthening the rule of law. The continued strengthening of the Police Service and the judiciary of Kosovo, through the inclusion of minorities and gender mainstreaming, which help to broaden the social base, are essential in order to improve the security situation. That goal is also tied in with UNMIK's regional approach in combating organized crime.

The progress made in these areas could have a decisive impact in helping to normalize the situation vis-à-vis freedom of movement and a noted speeding up of sustainable returns, which can also be encouraged by the restoration of essential public services.

Furthermore, the Secretary-General's recommendation on the transformation of the Kosovo Protection Corps into a disciplined civil emergency agency merits careful study, particularly as concerns the structural relations between that entity and the Kosovo Police Service. We would like to know if such a study is envisaged.

The economic situation in Kosovo, which the Secretary-General described as one of the poorest economies in a poor region, is indeed difficult, requires that the international community provide greater financial assistance in order to ensure sustained economic growth in the province. In that respect, the unemployment rate in the province is particularly worrisome and there is a need to step up the necessary reforms to eliminate those factors that are slowing growth, including in terms of the electrical supply, the investment climate, proposed privatizations, the precarious situation as concerns property rights, and, of course, the combat against fraud and misappropriations of resources.

The province's relations with Belgrade must be normalized. This could be helped by the restoration of working relations with the Provisional Institutions in Kosovo. My delegation welcomes the open attitude of the Belgrade authorities vis-à-vis the inter-ethnic dialogue. Such a dialogue must be cross-cutting and encompass the greatest possible number of aspects of the Kosovo Administration.

In that respect, UNMIK must step up its work in mediating among the various communities, with a view to adopting a work plan to ensure the consistent implementation of the standards before status policy. Every opportunity for peace must be seized quickly in order to strengthen the process under way.

On behalf of my delegation, I should like to take this opportunity very strongly to condemn the heinous terrorist attack in the Moscow subway. We extend our sympathy to the bereaved families and to the people of Russia.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): At this, the first public meeting, I should like, Sir, to wish you every success as President of the Council. I should like also to thank Ambassadors Muñoz and Maquieira for their past stewardship of the Council.

I, too, wish to associate myself with the sympathy expressed earlier to the Russian Government, and indeed we should condemn all such acts of terrorism against innocent people, wherever they may take place. I should like to associate myself with the remarks to be made later by Ambassador Ryan on behalf of the Presidency of the European Union.

I thank Mr. Holkeri for his report and for the contribution that the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is making in Kosovo. There has been much progress in Kosovo since the establishment of UNMIK, but there is clearly much more to do. I should like to set out five simple points.

First, all politicians in Kosovo need to show a greater commitment to, and to assume real responsibility for, sustainable progress in the province. They should manifest a determination to improve the lives of all Kosovo's people. We think that it is time for all Kosovo politicians fully to support a common agenda and the agreed standards. Those standards include dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina, and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government should

establish delegations for that dialogue, and in particular for the working groups, without further delay.

Secondly, ownership carries with it responsibilities. The United Kingdom expects the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government to demonstrate their capacity to govern, their concern for all of Kosovo's citizens and their commitment to reform, in line with European integration — in short, to fulfil the responsibilities they already have. Only then should we be ready to consider suggestions of their taking on further responsibilities.

But those responsibilities in the Constitutional Framework that would normally be reserved for States cannot be transferred pending the settlement of Kosovo's future status — its final status. We would welcome attendance by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government at the quarterly review meetings in the Security Council, provided that any delegation is strictly multi-ethnic. But in saying that, the PISG should recognize and appreciate the fact that the Council will expect such representation to be accompanied by tangible progress.

Thirdly, Mr. Holkeri dwelled on standards for Kosovo, set out within the framework of resolution 1244 (1999), which remain, in our view, the only way forward for a settlement which would eventually provide for European integration. Non-participation by the Kosovo Serbs in the standards and implementation working groups is not consistent with those aims. Belgrade should not, for its part, obstruct their attendance. Rather, it should encourage their participation.

None of this is taking place in a vacuum. On 12 December, this Council endorsed an approach which introduced a review mechanism for progress on standards. It comprised the following elements: the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government's progress on implementing the standards will be reviewed quarterly; the Special Representative will report back, through the Secretary-General's reports to the Council, on progress made in each reporting period; and the formal review in mid-2005 — or earlier if progress warrants — will serve as a basis upon which to decide whether to begin a process to determine Kosovo's future status in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999).

There is nothing, as I see it, automatic about that process. If Kosovo has made the necessary progress on the standards, then a process will begin to determine the final status in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999); but if it does not pass the review on that date, then there will have to be another review at a later date. If I may, I should like to underline one very simple message. There will be, in the United Kingdom's view, no decision on process or outcomes of status discussions until the standards are met. All final status options remain on the table within the principles of full observance for democracy, human rights, multi-ethnicity and minority representation.

Along with that, however, there are two key points to be stressed. The assessment will be negative if insufficient progress is made, and the process will not be derailed because some on either side object to it. Extremists have had their day in the Balkans and those who obstruct progress, in our view, deserve no say in the future of Kosovo.

Fourthly, we very much welcome the joint efforts of the United Nations and the European Union to tackle corruption. A strong, coordinated approach by both bodies lies at the heart of tackling that problem. Investigative and remedial action are equally important. We welcome, therefore, the recommendations made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services in its report. We cannot expect local communities to live up to their responsibilities if the international community is not to live up to its own. The United Nations and the European Union have our continued and full political support in that regard.

Fifthly and lastly, UNMIK is a very large mission. It represents a very significant investment for the United Nations and for the international community. In 2004-2005, it will comprise some 8,000 staff members, costing about $270 million. UNMIK's role has changed since its inception in 1999. The demands are now very different. I think it is now incumbent upon all of us — and I know that Mr. Holkeri takes this particularly seriously himself — to make sure that the structures we have deliver against the challenges of today. The priority is clear — progress on standards — and, with the completion of the transfer of competencies under chapter 5 of the Constitutional Framework, UNMIK should look at whether its resources are as well directed as they should be or whether, indeed, there is scope for change as part of a natural review of every organization. The challenge for UNMIK, with the assistance of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, is to make

sure that it adapts to meet, efficiently and cost-effectively, our shared objectives for the future benefit of Kosovo and for all Kosovars.

The international community has demonstrated its commitment to Kosovo and it remains so committed. We are committed to a better future for South-East Europe. The international organizations as a whole pretty well are heavily involved in the province. It is now time for the partnership with the Kosovars to evolve, to reduce the dependence upon the external players, and for greater ownership by the people of Kosovo. However, that requires, crucially, responsibility and a commitment to the ideals and the standards that have been set out. That is what we now expect of the Kosovars.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Maquieira (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, may I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and wish you every success.

On behalf of my delegation, I should like briefly to thank others for their kind words addressed to us in connection with our presidency.

I should like to extend to the Russian delegation our most sincere condolences over the attack that took place in Moscow and to ask it to convey them to the authorities of their country and to the people affected.

It is always a pleasure to have Mr. Holkeri here with us and to hear him speak. I thank him very much for his statement this morning, in which he told us of the situation on the ground in Kosovo in recent months. He knows, from our many statements in the past, that our delegation supports him and the staff of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) as they carry out their mandate under resolution 1244 (1999). The success of the "standards before status" policy requires concrete progress with respect to standards. We therefore believe it to be extremely helpful to have a work plan that allows us to measure the extent to which those standards are being met. It is also useful that UNMIK and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government are currently meeting in working groups on those standards. We trust that the Serb representatives will soon join those working groups.

We also endorse the focus on undertaking future assessments and agree with Mr. Holkeri on the need for the Provisional Institutions, within their sphere of competency, to be held accountable for progress made towards attaining the standards. Similarly, we eagerly await the results of the periodic reviews and, ultimately, the full assessment of progress made by the Provisional Institutions as they proceed to implement the standards. That will have a crucial impact on progress towards determining the moment to launch the statutory process and the future status of Kosovo, in accordance with resolution 1244 (1999).

It is essential that the Provisional Institutions become truly multi-ethnic and that the leaders of Kosovo not be distracted by symbolic issues from their fundamental task of improving the day-to-day lives of the inhabitants. We also think it necessary that the Kosovo Assembly keep within its competencies established in the Constitutional Framework. We reiterate that unless there is a significant, sustainable return of internally displaced persons and refugees, unless there is adequate freedom of movement, unless the parallel institutions vanish, it will not be possible to build a multi-ethnic, democratic society that will be able to bring together all of the inhabitants of Kosovo without any kind of exclusiveness.

There must be no further intimidation or violence, particularly against minorities. We thus deplore the violence against the Serbian community in Kosovo. We trust that the parties will reach a satisfactory and timely agreement on transparent modalities for privatization and that this will have a positive impact on economic growth and development in the region. The complete transfer of non-reserved responsibilities to the Provisional Institutions under Chapter 5 of the Constitutional Framework has been encouraging.

Lastly, the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina and the greater communication between UNMIK and the Kosovo Assembly will undoubtedly help secure a better situation for the people of Kosovo.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Chile for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Gatilov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset let me express our appreciation to members of the Security Council and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Holkeri, for their condolences with respect to the terrorist act

that took place in Moscow. We will convey those words of condolence to the Government and people of Russia.

We welcome you, Mr. President, to preside over the Council this month and wish you every success at this post. We also express our gratitude to the Ambassador of Chile, Mr. Muñoz, and the entire delegation of Chile for their skilful leadership in the Council in January.

We express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), and also to the UNMIK head, Mr. Holkeri, for the detailed briefing on the situation in the province. We note the attendance at today's Council meeting of the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Montenegro, Mr. Perović.

The assessments in the report and the statement of the Special Representative greatly coincide with our view of the processes under way in Kosovo. The central development at this phase of the Kosovo settlement was the launching of the mechanism to review implementation, by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, of standards established by the international community for implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) on the basis of the "standards before status" policy, and also of legislation now in effect in the province. It is important that this process be implemented with the United Nations taking a leading role and under the close political leadership of the Security Council.

The "Standards for Kosovo" document endorsed by the Council in the presidential statement of 12 December 2003 (*S/PRST/2003/26*) sets out a set of criteria the implementation of which will be compelling evidence of movement in the province towards establishing a multi-ethnic and democratic society, a society in which equal human rights must be ensured, including security, freedom of movement and return to their homes by all representatives of all communities of Kosovo, regardless of their ethnic origins. This is specifically why we support the clearly stated position of the Secretary-General and the UNMIK leadership that any attempts to blur or ease standards under pressure from any quarter are unacceptable.

We agree with the Secretary-General's view of that movement forward in the Kosovo settlement is not possible without achieving progress on standards. Considerable effort is still called for in this respect. The Provisional Institutions of the province clearly have the responsibility for implementation of the standards in their spheres of competences. Here, as is clearly underscored in the Secretary-General's report, statements by provincial leaders, including with respect to their commitment to multi-ethnicity, must be borne out by genuine actions. Unfortunately, we see that in practice the interests of the minorities continue to be frequently ignored. Key requirements regarding the situation of non-Albanian inhabitants of Kosovo are not being implemented with respect to the return of refugees or internally displaced persons. There is no reliable or equal security for the entire population of the province, nor are there universally equal fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to fair conditions of employment. There is no adequate representation of minorities, above all Serbians, in the structures of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government.

Like other Council members, we are certain that without radical improvement of the situation the process of building a democratic, multi-ethnic society in Kosovo will remain stalled.

We share the Secretary-General's concerns over attempts by the leadership of the Provisional Institutions in the province and in the Kosovo Assembly to overstep their authority, to persistently overlook the interests of the minorities and even to challenge the authority of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. We believe that such unacceptable actions are evidence of an effective disengagement of the Kosovo Albanian leaders from implementation of the international community's standards for Kosovo.

We anticipate that UNMIK will rapidly complete preparation of the plan for implementing the standards, a plan that details the necessary specific steps for the implementation of the "Standards for Kosovo" document. We look forward to the presentation of the draft plan to the Council and are ready to constructively consider it. We welcome the Secretary-General's decision to report quarterly to the Council as part of the review mechanism on progress of the Provisional Institutions in implementation of those standards. Such reporting is necessary, since it is the basis on which the Council will be able to objectively assess movement towards implementation of the standards. We share the view of the importance of

constructively involving all Kosovo communities in the preparation of the plan and subsequently in its implementation. We note the work of UNMIK in this areas. Clearly, there is still a lot to be done.

An essential element in the "Standards for Kosovo" document is the establishment of a direct dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina on practical issues of mutual interest. We welcome the Special Representative's efforts in this direction. We anticipate a rapid naming of delegations of the parties to all four working groups and their beginning their work within the time frame set by Mr. Holkeri.

An important component of efforts to advance the Kosovo settlement will also be to bolster a constructive dialogue between UNMIK and Belgrade. One channel for this could be the high-level Belgrade-UNMIK working group established in 2001. Launching the political process meant to determine the final status of Kosovo must be conditioned on implementation of the standards established by the international community and the construction in the province of a democratic, multi-ethnic society.

We share the view that the implementation of the standards in the province and a positive outcome to the comprehensive review of their implementation — the first opportunity for which could be in mid-2005 — will not automatically trigger the political process determining the province's final status. We believe that the Security Council must take the decision to begin that process. As a permanent member of the Security Council and as a participant in the Contact Group, Russia intends to continue to participate actively in the overall efforts to seek a just, balanced and lasting settlement to the Kosovo issue.

Ms. Menéndez (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation associates itself with the condemnation that you, Mr. President, made on behalf of the Security Council with respect to the brutal terrorist attack in Moscow and with the condolences conveyed to the Government and the people of Russia.

We congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council, and we congratulate Chile on its endeavours in the presidency last month.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement to be made by Ireland on behalf of the European Union.

Our thanks go to Mr. Holkeri. Spain joins in his appeal to all leaders and communities of Kosovo to participate in the process and to achieve the full attainment of the standards. It associates itself with others in urging all actors to participate fully in that process.

Mr. Holkeri's briefing reveals a mixed reality of bright and dark patches. It revealed that there has been progress in some areas and worrisome stagnation in others. For example, there have been improvements in the security situation, on property rights and on some legislative and economic issues. But it is very clear that much remains to be done on privatization, refugee returns, the direct dialogue and the treatment of minorities, which are crucial elements of the standards.

The publication on 10 December 2003 of the "Standards for Kosovo" document was a milestone for the region. It sets forth on paper, clearly and precisely, the political objectives that the international community desires for Kosovo. At the same time, it reaffirms the principles of "standards before status", which underpins the entire philosophy. The document also revives a process that had been somewhat dormant by providing a renewed frame of reference for the personnel of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) deployed in the area and for the local authorities, who have welcomed the document. Once it is made public, the implementation plan will be the complementary document necessary for attaining the ambitious objectives set out in the "Standards for Kosovo" document. It will enable the Security Council to have up-to-date and detailed information on the developments on the ground.

In that connection, Spain believes that the delay apparently to occur in the document's publication will be detrimental for UNMIK itself — having stated a deadline that was not met — and for the process itself, given the limited time at our disposal. In other words, we have barely 15 months, with, let us not forget, two electoral processes to take place in that time. However, those will not be substantial problems if the plan comes out soon — as has been announced on several occasions — and if the premises the entire peace process has been based so far are respected.

Here, I shall reiterate some of those premises that Spain believes must be taken into account in the coming months. First, it is important to note that the plan is not, and should not be, a joint document of

UNMIK and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government. Rather, it should provide a practical method for complying with, implementing and evaluating the standards established by the international community.

Secondly, implementation of the standards does not prejudge either the decision the Security Council must take on the beginning of the status process or the future status of the territory, as the Secretary-General very clearly notes in his report (S/2004/71). Rather, implementation of the work plan is a necessary condition for creating a reasonable, democratic climate so that the dialogue can take place in a legitimate manner.

Thirdly, it is our understanding that the plan's objective is to measure actual progress made in implementing resolution 1244 (1999). One of the requirements that most concerns us is progress in the direct dialogue with Belgrade. We support Mr. Holkeri's appeal to the parties to ensure that all working groups can begin their work as soon as possible.

Finally, we must not forget that our common objective is to restore a multi-ethnic Kosovo that is based on values such as tolerance and mutual respect and that can freely decide its own future. The Provisional Institutions, in particular the Kosovo Assembly, have a very special responsibility for the success or failure of that process. We urge them to make progress on the establishment of an apolitical administration with the participation of minorities at all levels, including the Kosovo Protection Corps, and on the economic recovery of Kosovo by means of an equitable legal framework and a fair privatization policy. As well, we appeal to the Kosovo Serbs to participate constructively in this process, one which, we recall, has the support of the entire international community.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Spain for her kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Cunningham (United States of America): Let me join in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency and in commending Ambassador Muñoz and his delegation on their effective work last month on our behalf.

We also extend our condolences to the Government and the people of Russia over the terrible terrorist attack today in Moscow. We condemn it and all such attacks.

I also thank the Special Representative, Mr. Holkeri, for his comprehensive assessment of the situation in Kosovo. The Special Representative is doing an admirable job in a period when key policy initiatives are being implemented in Kosovo, and he enjoys my Government's unqualified support. I also welcome the participation today of Assistant Foreign Minister Perović.

We are entering the beginning phases of a review mechanism that will assess Kosovo's progress in implementing the eight internationally endorsed standards, a mechanism initiated by the Contact Group and now being carried out under the auspices of the Special Representative.

The Security Council welcomed the review mechanism in its presidential statement of 12 December (S/PRST/2003/26). My Government fully supports that review mechanism. It is meant to spur Kosovo's implementation of the eight standards of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), which represent the only path for Kosovo to take to normalize economic and political conditions, to create a secure environment for the return and reintegration of internally displaced persons and refugees, to create a truly multi-ethnic society, to establish normal relations with Belgrade and other neighbouring areas and, finally — if sufficient progress has been made — to proceed to a process of determining its future political status.

I would like to emphasize that of the eight standards on the basis of which Kosovo's progress will be evaluated, those affecting the securing of Kosovo's multi-ethnic future must have uppermost priority.

The Special Representative today informed the Council about progress in drafting an implementation plan. This plan is a crucial guide to the review mechanism approved by the Council last December. It is essential, therefore, that the plan be presented soon so that all actors involved have the necessary markers and guideposts to direct them in implementing the standards.

For the standards implementation process to be truly effective, it should involve all parties and

communities in Kosovo. In that regard, we note with approval the participation of elements of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in the working groups that the Special Representative has convoked to implement the standards. We commend Prime Minister Rexhepi for his leadership in this regard and urge both him and the ministers in his Government to participate actively and without reservation in the standards implementation working groups, and to follow up with concrete action once the implementation plan has been presented.

In this context, I would note that the United States does not support the transfer of so-called reserved competencies to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government at this time, although there is ample room for greater participation by local government institutions in decision-making in those areas, while leaving ultimate authority to UNMIK.

It is also important that the Kosovo Serb community participate in the working groups for standards implementation, accepting the Special Representative's longstanding invitation to do so. Participation in the working groups is the best way for the Kosovo Serbs to represent their interests, and in that way the Serb community of Kosovo can take its rightful place in shaping the future of Kosovo as a multi-ethnic society. We urge the Serb community of Kosovo to engage in this process.

The direct dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina is one of the eight standards on which there can and should be immediate progress. The Secretary-General noted in his report that the introduction of the review mechanism has created a new more favourable environment for the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government to accept participation in the direct dialogue. We call on the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government to participate fully in the direct dialogue and for the Government in Belgrade to continue to participate.

We note with special concern the reference in the Secretary-General's report to the entrenchment of so-called parallel institutions in Kosovo: institutions maintained by the Government of Serbia outside the governing institutions of Kosovo provided for in resolution 1244 (1999). These institutions undermine the efforts of legitimately elected officials and are harmful to intercommunal relations. We call on the Government in Belgrade to bring these institutions under the purview of UNMIK and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government or to abolish them altogether.

We would like to see Kosovo make sufficient progress so that the international community can produce a positive review in mid-2005, enabling us to proceed to determine Kosovo's future status. However, the international community should not and must not flinch from judging the situation objectively. If Kosovo's institutions choose to approach the standards process half-heartedly, the international community and the United Nations must not hesitate to issue a negative assessment and postpone the process to determine future status. In the meantime, the United States will continue to do all it can to assist institutions in Kosovo in implementing the internationally endorsed standards.

I would like to thank Mr. Holkeri again for his briefing and for the work that he and his team are doing in Kosovo. I would like to reiterate my Government's unqualified support for his efforts.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of the United States for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Trautwein (Germany): I should like first of all to express the deep shock of my Government at this morning's attack on the metro in Moscow, and to extend the condolences of the German Government to the Russian people, and especially to the families that have been affected by that insidious terrorist attack.

We would like to welcome you, Sir, to the presidency of the Council for this month and assure you of the full cooperation of the German delegation in your work. At the same time, we would like to thank the Chilean delegation for their work during their presidency in the month of January.

Our special thanks go to the Special Representative, Mr. Holkeri, for his comprehensive briefing to the Council.

Germany fully subscribes to the statement that Ireland will make later on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to begin by expressing our full support for the Special Representative and for all the efforts he has undertaken in Pristina. The Secretary-General's report to the Security Council last month

(S/2004/71) painted an accurate picture of the progress that has been made and the many tasks that remain to be addressed in Kosovo. We share, in particular, the Secretary-General's hope that positive engagement by officials of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government on returns will translate this year into a more welcoming environment for displaced persons in all municipalities. Nothing would better demonstrate progress in achieving the standards than a significant increase in the number of returns in 2004.

The Secretary-General also notes the progress made by the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) towards becoming an effective civilian emergency response organization. We note with satisfaction that the KPC accepted the need to investigate allegations of criminal involvement on the part of a few members of the Corps. The KPC must free itself from any taint of criminal connections and confirm its identity as a civilian organization with no military role in Kosovo. We are confident that other donor countries will join Germany in funding the civilian training of the KPC this year so that it can continue to make progress along that path. We also urge the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government to consider granting some additional funding to the KPC from the Kosovo Consolidated Budget.

On the negative side, we share the Secretary-General's criticism of Pristina and Belgrade for failing to effectively launch a direct dialogue. In view of the urgent need for progress on such practical issues as energy, missing persons and returns, it is shameful that talks on those issues have not yet begun. The Special Representative has issued invitations to direct dialogue sessions on missing persons and energy to take place in Pristina on 18 February. This is an excellent opportunity to get the dialogue under way, and we urge Pristina and Belgrade to send to those sessions teams that are prepared to make concrete progress.

We also believe it would be extremely helpful if Belgrade took a more positive stance on the "Standards for Kosovo" document, which was presented to the Security Council in December. We are deeply disturbed that Belgrade appears to be actively discouraging Kosovo Serbs from participating in the working groups that are currently elaborating the implementation plan for the standards. The way forward this year for Kosovo will be defined by the joint standards implementation plan, which is to be presented soon. All communities must be fully engaged in this important project.

I should like to focus particularly on the economy standard. Economic growth is essential to Kosovo's future, and putting socially owned enterprises in private hands should give an important and necessary boost to the Kosovo economy. We are surprised and disappointed that officials of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and their representatives on the board of the Kosovo Trust Agency are not taking a more constructive approach to the privatization process. Kosovo Trust Agency managers — despite some risk that they might expose themselves to personal legal liability — are prepared to move ahead with the privatization of a considerable number of enterprises and to put additional firms up for sale in a third privatization tender. It does no one any good — least of all the unemployed workers of Kosovo — to stand by watching while such transactions are delayed by disagreements within the board of the Kosovo Trust Agency. We also hope that United Nations officials and representatives of the economic pillar of UNMIK can soon work out an effective mechanism for eliminating the personal liability risks now being borne by staff involved in privatization.

Finally, let me close by again praising the efforts of the Council of Europe to create a decentralization plan for Kosovo. If properly handled, decentralization should increase the spirit of cooperation among the various communities in Kosovo by enhancing the sense of security and empowerment that comes from having greater control over essential local decisions. Decentralization would also provide an effective mechanism for eliminating the illegal parallel Kosovo Serb institutions that are such a blight on the local administrative structure of Kosovo. We very much hope that UNMIK and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government can take full advantage of the Council of Europe proposal and that it can make significant progress in decentralization over the next year.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Germany for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Baali (Algeria): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to express our gratitude to

Ambassador Muñoz and his delegation for conducting our work efficiently last month. I would also like to express my deepest condolences to the Russian delegation after the horrendous terrorist attack that took place today in Moscow. Finally, let me join other delegations in thanking and commending Mr. Holkeri for his comprehensive briefing and for his work in Kosovo.

My delegation welcomes the establishment last November of a mechanism to review the progress of the Provisional Institutions towards meeting benchmarks of the "standards before status" policy and the launch on 10 December of the "Standards for Kosovo" document, which sets out in detailed terms the standards to be achieved by Kosovo. In the same spirit, we are pleased with the transfer of responsibilities, under Chapter 5 of the Constitutional Framework, to the Provisional Institutions at the end of 2003, which constitutes a very important development in the sense that such a transfer will increase their capacity to respond to the needs of citizens in some areas. The completion of the transfer of responsibilities, however, remains an objective to attain. The meeting that took place in Vienna on 14 October 2003 to launch the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade also represents a positive initiative that can help to create confidence and a climate conducive to constructive cooperation in areas of mutual interest. That initiative deserves to be supported.

Those developments have given new momentum to the current policy, which needs to be sustained by early adoption of the work plan for implementation of the standards. In that respect, my delegation expresses its support for the Steering Group, co-chaired by the Special Representative and by the Kosovo Prime Minister, to convene meetings of the working groups for that purpose. In the meantime, we consider that the successful completion of that task will require an inclusive process. We emphasize that greater attention should now be devoted to the obstacles preventing participation by all the parties in the process. On the other hand, my delegation is pleased to hear that some progress has been made towards consolidating the rule of law, particularly in fighting organized crime and terrorism and in increasing minority participation in Kosovo's justice system.

The significant results we have witnessed in the process of implementing resolution 1244 (1999) through the "standards before status" policy should not, however, divert us from the difficult part of the process or from the challenges that remain to be met before the general review of progress is carried out in mid-2005. In fact, the reality in Kosovo shows that the task of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and of the Provisional Institutions is challenging and strenuous.

Indeed, the Secretary-General's report (S/2004/71) reveals the difficulties and challenges to overcome in the months ahead. It is imperative that UNMIK and the Provisional Institutions intensify their efforts to meet the internationally endorsed standards that are prerequisites for the beginning of a political process leading to the determination of Kosovo's future status. The pledge of Kosovo's Prime Minister that "the Government will do its best to contribute to the realization of these standards" is encouraging.

Building a prosperous, democratic, multi-ethnic and tolerant Kosovo is our common goal; it is also our common responsibility. Economic prosperity in Kosovo requires, in our opinion, creating appropriate and essential conditions conducive to economic development that can generate basic infrastructure, can reduce the alarming unemployment rate — which remains between 50 and 60 per cent — and can help to improve living conditions in Kosovo.

Furthermore, building a multi-ethnic and tolerant society in the province requires promotion of the process of reconciliation and understanding, achievement of the standard on the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their places of origin, and protection of the rights of minorities. Putting an end to acts of intimidation and violence — in particular against minorities — improving security conditions and increasing freedom of movement and active participation by all communities in the Provisional Institutions are of paramount importance.

The dismantling of parallel structures in Kosovo would also consolidate efforts aimed at easing tensions and promoting a multi-ethnic and harmonious Kosovo. Bringing the whole process to fruition will require genuine commitment on the part of all Kosovans and financial and political backing from the international community. In that regard, my delegation shares the view of the Secretary-General that UNMIK's work can continue at its current pace only if the necessary funding in crucial areas is available and only if his

appeal for the provision of financial and other assistance is met.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Algeria for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Lucas (Angola): Please accept our congratulations, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. You can be assured of our full cooperation. We take this opportunity to congratulate the Chilean delegation on its successful stewardship of the Council during the month of January.

We join previous speakers in condemning, in the strongest possible terms, the terrorist attack in Moscow. We express our condolences to the families of the victims and to the Russian authorities.

We welcome Mr. Harri Holkeri and thank him for his comprehensive presentation of the Secretary-General's report (S/2004/71) on the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). My delegation would like to reaffirm once again Angola's unwavering commitment to achieving a peaceful outcome of the conflict in Kosovo. Despite difficulties, we are encouraged by positive developments in the peace process, and I should like to highlight some of them.

We welcome the progress achieved by Kosovo's Provisional Institutions towards their normal functioning at the central and local levels. We are encouraged by the improvement in the functioning of the Kosovo Assembly in the preparation of its legislation as well as by the progress made by the joint municipal administrations. However, greater efforts are required for the achievement of greater participation by ethnic minorities in this process. The number of public employees in the Provisional Institutions has been increasing but is still at an unsatisfactory level.

The security situation, while improved, is still a matter of concern. Despite the decrease in ethnically motivated crimes, several acts of violence have taken place in the last few months, while organized crime remains a great obstacle to the establishment of the rule of law.

The deployment of the Kosovo Police Service is a positive step forward in the fight against organized crime, and the Kosovo Protection Corps, as a civil emergency agency, has improved its professionalism and its capacity to come to the aid of the civilian population in various emergency situations.

My delegation also welcomes the development of social projects that aim at improving the population's quality of life. We consider that approach an important instrument for the return of refugees and displaced persons under conditions of security. Another challenge is the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. We urge both parties to keep their commitment to democracy and to re-establish a direct and constructive dialogue on practical issues of mutual interest.

Major challenges remain ahead, including strengthening the rule of law and improving security conditions and freedom of movement for all ethnic groups as a means of advancing towards a democratic and multi-ethnic society that is based on the respect of basic human rights, regardless of ethnic affiliations, and on the participation of all communities in the political process.

The territory's economic recovery and development are also indispensable for ensuring a sustainable normalization of Kosovo's society.

To conclude, I wish to reaffirm my delegation's confidence in UNMIK's strategy, "Standards for Kosovo", as a key instrument for achieving the full implementation of resolution 1244 (1999) and the Constitutional Framework. The task forces established in that framework can be decisive tools for the peace process's advancement and for the definition of the final political status of Kosovo.

My delegation urges all concerned in Kosovo and in the region to cooperate in a constructive manner with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the full implementation of resolution 1244 (1999) and the "Standards for Kosovo" policy, in order to achieve stability, prosperity and a multi-ethnic, multicultural, democratic society in Kosovo.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Angola for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Valle (Brazil): My delegation wishes to express its shock and indignation at the tragic attack perpetrated in Moscow and conveys its deep and sincere condolences to the Government and to the people of the Russian Federation through our fellow representatives in this Chamber.

First of all, Sir, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month. We are fully assured that, under your guidance, our work will be conducted with great efficiency. We also take this opportunity to extend thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador Heraldo Muñoz, for the competence with which he presided over the Council during the month of January.

I would like to express appreciation to Special Representative Harry Holkeri for his comprehensive briefing and for the important work he has been carrying out as head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). My delegation welcomes also the presence of the Assistant Foreign Minister of Serbia and Montenegro, Mr. Zeljko Perovic, at this meeting of the Security Council.

At the outset, I would like to begin by reaffirming Brazil's continuing commitment to a stable, democratic, peaceful and multi-ethnic Kosovo. As a member of the Council in 1999, Brazil took part in the negotiations on resolution 1244 (1999) aiming at the promotion of reconciliation, stability and peace in that war-torn province. The same ideals move us today.

The latest report of the Secretary-General shows a mixed picture. A number of challenges remain on the ground, and much has yet to be achieved. However, our goals seem to be well defined and the path ahead - how to move forward – is becoming increasingly clear.

In that connection, major developments are the establishment of a mechanism to review the progress of the Provisional Institutions towards meeting the benchmarks in the standards before status policy and the launching of the "Standards for Kosovo" document.

As Mr. Holkeri pointed out in his statement of 16 December last, those standards describe a normal society; they are goals to be pursued by all – the Government, political leaders, and, above all, the people of Kosovo. Based on them, Kosovo will show that it is ready to discuss its future status.

Our delegation deems of utmost importance the full adherence of all individuals and groups to that initiative. A truly all-inclusive, multi-ethnic Kosovo can be built only by the people's decisive involvement and participation, taking advantage of every opportunity to do so. That certainly can prove difficult, but, as stated by the Secretary-General, lack of participation in the Provisional Institutions and a disengagement from the political process can only hamper real progress.

We are now looking forward to the standards implementation work plan. We expect representatives of all minorities — especially Kosovo Serb representatives — to take part in the working groups already set up.

The issue of relations between the authorities in Pristina and Belgrade is a crucial one at this stage. Both sides can certainly do more in order to provide the political process with effective momentum. The Provisional Institutions must not remain unwilling to engage in direct dialogue with Belgrade on practical issues of mutual interest. That reluctance amounts to obstruction, as it fails to foment trust and confidence between the parties. We call upon the Kosovo Government to appoint, as soon as possible, its multi-ethnic delegations for each of the four working groups, so as to provide proper follow-up to the Vienna meeting of 14 October last.

Belgrade, in turn, should be willing to compromise in its positions regarding the "Standards for Kosovo" document, and the Kosovo Serb representatives should take part in the discussions about their implementation.

Authorities in Belgrade can play a positive role on the issue of Serbian-run parallel structures. The existence of those structures, despite the establishment of official institutions in the same areas, is clearly detrimental to the effective rule of law throughout the province and to intercommunal relations.

We welcome the reports of a renewed atmosphere of cooperation between UNMIK and the Kosovo Government, and commend the completion, at the end of 2003, of the transfer of responsibilities, under chapter 5 of the Constitutional Framework, from UNMIK to the Provisional Institutions.

The work of the Government and of the Assembly shows the rising level of maturity of those institutions in the last months. This is reflected in the adoption of the 2004 budget, which was promulgated by Mr. Holkeri last December. It should be acknowledged that that budget is the first to be prepared and managed by the Kosovo Minister of Finance and Economy.

Yet the Assembly has also reverted to the practice of adopting declarations and decisions in areas beyond

its responsibilities. That trend should be firmly avoided. Municipalities' capacities also seem to be improving; yet that evolution stands to be questioned as long as their decisions fail, as they often do, to reflect the views of civil society and minorities. We encourage them to adopt a more transparent attitude and porous relations towards their constituencies.

As concerns the Assembly elections scheduled for this year, we welcome the establishment of the Central Election Commission secretariat, as well as the support being given to the process by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). We expect UNMIK to present shortly the regulatory framework for the elections, based on the recommendations formulated by the Elections Working Group.

Ethnically motivated crimes and other acts of coercion and discrimination regarding minorities in Kosovo are still a matter of concern for my delegation, despite the stabilizing trend in the crime situation since 1999, as stated in the report. The means necessary to counter such incidents are clear and have been reiterated many times to the Kosovar central and local authorities by the Council, the Secretary-General and the UNMIK leadership itself. First, firm determination should be shown in investigating responsibilities and combating impunity; and, secondly, an official policy of tolerance and coexistence towards minority groups should be promoted that not only encompasses their greater participation in decision-making processes and fairer access to civil service positions, including the judicial system and police, but also supports mixed-ethnicity institutions, especially schools. Only affirmative steps designed to bring people together rather than alienating them can overcome the hatreds of the past. Improvements such as those can certainly give a significant impulse to the return of minorities to Kosovo. It is disquieting that the return rate remains very slow, with less than 4,000 people having returned in 2003.

In parallel, we commend UNMIK for pursuing a regional approach to combating organized crime, involving Montenegro, Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Furthermore, cooperation between Serbian police and UNMIK seems to be improving, thereby allowing enforced action against criminals. Our delegation welcomes the efforts to root out Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) members with links to extremist organizations and organized crime. The work of the KPC as a civil emergency agency continues to improve. It intervenes 30 times a month on average in various emergencies, including forest fires and floods. These are encouraging developments.

Kosovo remains one of the poorest economies in the region. Although the projected rate of annual growth is around 4.5 per cent, that rate is lower than that of previous years, mainly due to the withdrawal of international donors, according to the Secretary-General's report. Therefore, we would stress the centrality of foreign assistance in maintaining Kosovo's current growth and welfare levels. We call upon the international donor community to keep supporting the province.

Sustainable development, however, will depend on the capacity of Kosovars themselves to improve conditions for investment. In that connection, we expect the Provisional Institutions to shoulder their responsibilities. Incentives include even such basic features as a transparent, fair and effective Government and a society in which every individual is respected. Economic reform depends not only on regulatory laws, which are important, but also on an effective change of mentality.

Finally, I would like to commend the work of UNMIK, as well as of its partners — the European Union and the OSCE — and to endorse the Secretary-General's appeal for financial and other assistance in the many valuable tasks being carried out on the ground. My country is committed to the full implementation of resolution 1244 (1999) and the "standards before status" policy as the only reasonable choice for a multi-ethnic, democratic and peaceful Kosovo.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Brazil for his kind words addressed to me.

Mrs. D'Achon (France) (spoke in French): On behalf of my delegation, Sir, I congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. We also thank the delegation of Chile for its excellent work in January.

France sincerely joins in your words of condolence to the Russian delegation with respect to this morning's attack in Moscow.

I also wish to welcome the presence at this meeting of the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Montenegro, Mr. Perovic.

In my turn, I thank Mr. Holkeri for his comments, which usefully complement the Secretary-General's report. France fully endorses the statement shortly to be made by the Irish presidency of the European Union. I will therefore limit my statement to a few brief remarks.

First, we feel that the offer of a mechanism to review progress in the implementation of standards has given positive momentum to the cooperation of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government of Kosovo with the international community, which we should welcome. Such good prospects, however, must now be reflected in concrete action. We are well aware that the elaboration of the plan to implement the standards will require considerable work. We therefore support all the efforts of the Special Representative to ensure that the plan be made available as soon as possible. Close consultation with the Provisional Institutions and Belgrade is desirable. That being the case, it is clear that the length of such consultations will reduce the time available to the Provisional Institutions to implement the standards prior to the mid-2005 comprehensive review. We have every confidence that Mr. Holkeri will strike an appropriate balance.

Secondly, the implementation plan will be an important document. It will provide a reference point for measuring progress made by the Provisional Institutions towards the implementation of the standards. With the issuance of the Secretary-General's next report, and every quarter thereafter, we will be able, in full transparency and together, to assess the benchmarks attained. This is a matter of concretely implementing the "standards before status" policy. The policy, supported by the international community, consists of requiring that the Provisional Institutions, and they alone, achieve progress before the issue of status can be addressed. The plan must therefore be clearly addressed to the Provisional Institutions and to them alone. Any ambiguity could blur our common message. On that point, too, Mr. Holkeri has our full trust.

Thirdly, I wish to stress our hope that the quarterly progress reviews will confirm the positive momentum noted since November. Steady progress should enable us to look forward with some optimism to the comprehensive review planned for the second half of 2005. Clearly, however, the comprehensive review will not signal the automatic launching of discussions on status. I believe that we all agree in reaffirming that there is no automatic trigger of the date for beginning status discussions. Only sustained and steady progress will allow us to decide when the final status process should begin.

Finally, I conclude by endorsing the Secretary-General's words of encouragement to Belgrade and Pristina in his report. It is important that Serbia and Montenegro and the Kosovo Serbs promptly contribute to finalizing the plan to implement the standards. Their current disengagement can only harm their own interests. We heartily encourage them to participate with Mr. Holkeri in the process launched by the international community. For their part, the Provisional Institutions must henceforth confirm their commitment to implementing the standards. One clear signal of that would be their participation in direct dialogue with Belgrade, which not only is one of the eight standards – as several speakers before me have underscored – but would also enhance many real aspects of the daily lives of the people of Kosovo. We therefore hope that Pristina will soon send a positive signal in that area.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of France for her kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Baja (Philippines): Along with other members of the Council, we congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency for this month and commit our cooperation and support to you and to your presidency.

We also congratulate Ambassador Muñoz and the Chilean delegation on a successful presidency last month.

We thank the Secretary-General for his recent report and his Special Representative, Ambassador Harri Holkeri, for his informative briefing to us today.

We also join other Council members in expressing outrage at and condemnation of the suicide bombing in Moscow today and extend our condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government and people of the Russian Federation. Of course, these expressions would acquire added feeling and meaning if the international community were able to work out measures to pre-empt such terrorist acts.

Being the thirteenth speaker on this agenda item and speaking after France and Brazil does not leave us with much to say over and above what others have said already. Nevertheless, we would like to offer some observations and ideas.

First, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is no ordinary peacekeeping mission. Capacity-building and development are important components of the mission. Here, one of the objectives of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) is to build autonomous institutions of self-government and transfer administrative responsibility to those institutions.

Secondly, we welcome the positive developments that have taken place in Kosovo in the past several months. The most encouraging sign of progress is the renewed atmosphere of cooperation between UNMIK and the Kosovo Government, resulting from the launching in December of the "Standards for Kosovo" formula and the announcement, a month earlier, of a mechanism that would review Pristina's implementation of the standards. We also note other positive developments in such areas as legislation, at both the central and local levels of self-government, as well as the transfer of non-reserved responsibilities to the Provisional Institutions of self-government. Minority returns are also on the rise. The other day, UNMIK and the Danish Refugee Council were reported to have made possible the safe and successful return of four Kosovo Serbs four years after they fled their homes in Pristina. Nevertheless, much more needs to be done.

Third, the report introduced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (S/2004/71) shows that much more work is needed to reach the benchmarks in preparation for any form of final status for Kosovo. These areas include the judiciary, the police service, the penal system and the rights of minorities and displaced persons. Paragraphs 53 to 55 of the report mention that parallel administrative structures as well as lack of participation in the Provisional Institutions and of engagement in the political process by local leaders and institutions hinder real progress. All delegations have mentioned these parallel structures, and we would like to know how extensive these parallel structures are, what their impact is on the political process, how they can be dismantled and how to engage the local leaders and institutions in the political process.

Fourthly, we welcome the statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General that efforts will be made to open dialogue — or reopen dialogue — between Belgrade and Pristina. The report also said that Belgrade still finds the "Standards for Kosovo" document unacceptable and was of the view that the consultations had not been sufficient. It also stated that the Kosovo Serb leadership had distanced itself from the document, as had some Albanian leaders. Why is this? UNMIK is more that four years old and has had two Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. Since much has been improved there, this issue of an impasse should not be allowed to sit on the wall of distrust and should, like Humpty-Dumpty, have a great fall. Such a fall would have positive implications, not only for Kosovo, but for the entire region. We suggest that, in addition to the working groups, focal points of contact would promote confidence-building measures and cooperation on issues of common concern. I recall that when the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China were negotiating a code of conduct for the South China Sea, focal points were very useful.

Fifthly, as of 31 December 2003, we have 55 Filipinos in the UNMIK police. We would like to know how the UNMIK police is ensuring peace and stability and combating organized crime. As the representative of the United Kingdom stated, the actors in the area — the politicians, including UNMIK, the Kosovo Force and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and the diplomatic officers — need to develop greater cooperation and partnership amongst themselves. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General exercises praetorian authority over 2 significant number of sectors of Government and therefore plays a key role in ensuring a safe and secure environment in which institutions can function. At the end of the day, the United Nations is legally responsible for what happens in Kosovo. At the end of the day, the credibility of such future peacekeeping missions of a similar nature depends on a successful UNMIK.

Finally, the international community must remain engaged in Kosovo and committed to its international and internal development. The international civil and military commitment to Kosovo should be maintained for as long as the internal security situation requires. Kosovo needs the strong and sustained political will and commitment of the actors on the issue and the full engagement and support of the international

community, particularly on ways to implement the standards or reach the benchmarks. In this way, we may no longer have to avoid any longer the discussion of the issue of final status for Kosovo.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of the Philippines for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): We are shocked and appalled by the tragic news coming from Moscow regarding the horrific terrorist attack in the Russian capital's subway. We strongly condemn it, and I wish to express our deepest condolences to the bereaved families and to the Russian people.

I would like to join my colleagues in extending our appreciation to Chile for its busy and successful presidency and to wish the new Chinese presidency the greatest success. Let me also say that Romania associates itself with the statement to be delivered shortly on behalf of the European Union by the Irish representative, Ambassador Richard Ryan.

I too would like to thank Special Representative Holkeri for his thorough report. Romania appreciates the efforts he has made in Kosovo since taking up his duties, in particular those related to the initiation of dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina on practical issues of common concern and to the setting up of a comprehensive approach to the "standards before status" policy. A decisive period lies ahead for Kosovo. We would like to assure Mr. Holkeri of our full support and of our readiness to contribute to addressing the coming challenges.

I am pleased also to welcome the presence of Assistant Foreign Minister Perović at this meeting.

Romania continues to fully support resolution 1244 (1999) and its goal of a democratic multi-ethnic Kosovo. In this framework, Romania keenly supports the genuine implementation of standards in Kosovo. The Security Council should give no consideration to any future status for the province until the standards spelled out by the international community become effective in Kosovo. The standards are not mere technical benchmarks; they are the measure of Kosovo's transformation into an area offering safety and opportunity to all its inhabitants, an area that is no longer a challenge to regional stability. What is at stake here is not only the status of a province, but the status of each and every member of its population.

In fact, we believe that no status will prove to be a solution in Kosovo unless society there is prepared to live by the rules of democracy, law and ethnic tolerance, all the more so since societies in the surrounding region embrace those values and are steadily working to consolidate them. Nobody can afford to leave Kosovo society behind; the prime responsibility in this respect lies with the provisional authorities of the province.

Romania looks forward to the presentation, as soon as possible, of the action plan for standards implementation. Of course, standards have already started to be applied in Kosovo, but we will take the action plan as a concrete expression of the provisional authorities' commitment to the process and to their underlying political responsibilities.

In saying this, I would like to add that there should be, from the very start, a clear delimitation of responsibilities between the Provisional Institutions and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). In the end, only the Provisional Institutions and the people of Kosovo will have to measure up to the expectations of the Security Council and of the international community.

Romania stands ready to assist the process of standards implementation. We also believe that the European Union's Stabilization and Association Process Tracking Mechanism has a decisive role as concerns the "standards before status" policy.

Following the Special Representative's report on that matter, we urge the Provisional Authorities to give proper and equal consideration to all areas of the action plan. We would also like to strongly encourage the Kosovo Serbs to take part in the formulation and implementation of the action plan. What this process is all about is Kosovo's future, in which they have a share of their own. At this point, let me add — drawing on from Romania's experience of a transition — that it is always important for every minority to voice its concerns and proposals, and that every minority voice should be heard and be taken into account.

By the middle of next year, the Security Council will have a better picture of where Kosovo's society stands. We will not only look for a positive trend, which we already ascertain in some areas; we will look for that society to be in a sustainable condition, in which reconciliation plays a meaningful part. We will need to know whether reconciliation is possible. And

we will need to see whether Kosovo's society is functional by itself and in relation to its neighbours. If not, we will have to go back to work.

Key issues with regard to premises for reconciliation are direct dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina on practical issues of mutual interest, and secure and sustainable returns. The preservation of cultural heritage and religious sites is also of outstanding symbolic importance. We can never stress enough that this aspect will have a real impact on adjusting the mentality and the psychological mood of the populations involved.

The direct dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina is an absolute priority for implementing standards and for the prospect of reconciliation. Special attention should be paid by all parties involved to ensuring the effective functioning of the working groups within the framework of the direct dialogue. We also express our hope that a Serbian Government will be formed shortly and that it will continue to deliver on its responsibilities under the direct dialogue.

We believe that participation in that dialogue and the subsequent measures will prove — if given the proper chance — that reconciliation is an achievable goal. As a country of the region and as Chairman of the South-East European Cooperation Process for the period 2004-2005, Romania stands ready to contribute its share to fostering this process.

One final point I would like to make is about organized crime. This peril is one of the most competitive forces working against stability and peace and against plans for the democratic, multi-ethnic future of Kosovo. We cannot allow private interests to hinder the efforts of whole societies and States. The countries of South-East Europe have pledged cooperation against organized crime, and results can already be seen. There is a need for more operational coordination with UNMIK. And the Security Council should be kept informed of this important matter.

Since you, Ambassador Wang Guangya, have returned to the Chair, I would like to reiterate what I said at the beginning of my statement, wishing the best of success to your presidency and expressing our full trust that this success will be achieved under your able and proven guidance.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Romania for his kind words addressed to me.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

I associate myself with other colleagues in thanking Mr. Holkeri for his comprehensive briefing on the situation in Kosovo and on the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). I also thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2004/71), which is rich in detail.

We have consistently held the view that Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) provides the basis for the settlement of the question of Kosovo and that the "standards before status" policy is the guiding principle for the settlement of this question. We welcome the establishment of a review mechanism in that regard. We believe that it will help advance the political process in Kosovo. We hope that the parties concerned — the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and the Kosovo Serbs in particular — will actively cooperate with UNMIK and assist Mr. Holkeri in expeditiously developing a detailed work plan for the implementation of the standards for Kosovo.

We note that there has recently been a decrease in crime in Kosovo and that the rule of law has been strengthened. On the other hand, the economic situation in Kosovo remains grave, and the living conditions of ethnic minorities in particular need improvement. We hope that the Kosovo Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and the Government of Serbia and Montenegro will soon resume their direct dialogue on questions such as energy, transportation, missing persons and refugee returns; we hope that the talks will lead to concrete results as soon as possible and create conditions for multi-ethnic harmony in Kosovo so that its people can live and work in peace and contentment.

The comprehensive settlement of the question of Kosovo is an arduous task and a long process. The parties concerned should redouble their efforts, and the international community should continue its engagement and support with respect to this question. As always, China will support the efforts undertaken by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Holkeri, and by UNMIK.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I welcome the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Montenegro, and I give him the floor.

Mr. Perović (Serbia and Montenegro): Allow me to begin by joining previous speakers in expressing my Government's deepest condemnation of the terrorist attack in Moscow.

Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month and to thank you for convening this important meeting on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2004/71) on recent developments in the Kosovo and Metohija province of my country. Also, I thank Mr. Holkeri for his comprehensive briefing, to which my delegation listened with great attention and interest.

What we have learned from the Secretary-General's report regarding the current state of the implementation of the original standards for Kosovo and Metohija raises serious concerns. Allow me to note just the following examples.

The Provisional Institutions have continued to adopt declarations and decisions that are clearly outside their responsibility, prompting the interventions of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to annul such acts. Simultaneously, however, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) is seeking to involve the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in an advisory and consultative capacity within specific areas reserved for the Special Representative under chapter 8 of the Constitutional Framework. We find this difficult to understand in the light of the aforementioned repeated infringements by the Provisional Institutions on the Special Representative's powers. All this is taking place in an environment where non-Albanian communities are denied any meaningful participation in political life, to the extent that not even basic access to documentation in their mother tongues is ensured.

In the area of the rule of law, according to the Secretary-General's report, high-profile crimes against members of the Kosovo Serb community decreased significantly in the past three months. However, the report fails to provide information of any of the perpetrators of previous such crimes having been apprehended and brought to justice. This inevitably leads us to the conclusion that the culture of impunity regarding ethnically motivated crimes against Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija is still intact.

The report states that the rate of minority returns continues to increase, supporting this finding with the data that during 2003, 1,487 Kosovo Serbs returned to communities where they are in the minority. Comparing this figure with the number of internally displaced persons still in Serbia proper, which remains approximately 250,000, it is not difficult to conclude that it will take many, many years for all displaced persons to return to Kosovo and Metohija, as required by Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

Concerning other original standards, the report describes progress mainly as a slight improvement or an improvement with many remaining problems, or uses similar, ambiguous terms. In the meantime, incidents continue at various levels with alarming regularity. The Council is probably aware of the attack in Djakovica, on 21 January, on a KFOR vehicle transporting priests and a German television crew that was filming the remains of the Orthodox temple of the Holy Trinity there. Following that incident, the monastery priests have been denied further KFOR escorts, and their living conditions have considerably deteriorated in other respects. If the only priests in the area should be forced to leave as a result, it will be a heavy blow to the local Serbs and will further discourage the possibility of returns.

We were interested to hear the recent statement by the Deputy Special Representative, Mr. Cady, at the Stockholm international forum on the prevention of genocide. We share his views, as reported in the media, that in Kosovo and Metohija the victims became the perpetrators; that practically all ethnic Albanians went back in a matter of weeks after the establishment of the peacekeeping presence, whereas more than four years later most of the Serbs who fled have not returned; and that in order for reconciliation to occur, no crime can remain unpunished, whoever the victim or the perpetrator.

My Government also subscribes to Mr. Cady's conclusion that the main challenge for UNMIK is to create stable conditions for a multi-ethnic Kosovo, not only to prevent ethnic cleansing from occurring again when the mandate of the international mission comes to

an end, but also to ensure normal development and prosperity for all communities, which must be free from harassment and have equal access to institutions and an impartial police and justice system.

Clearly, the record of the Provisional Institutions in Kosovo and Metohija remains poor in the main. Some may argue — as UNMIK often does — that such a record is understandable in view of their limited experience, and that their performance is improving slightly and gradually.

The underlying problem, however, is that the Provisional Institutions do not want — and UNMIK so far has not succeeded in creating — conditions for the meaningful involvement of the Kosovo Serb community in the political life of the province. This also applies to the process of drafting the standards implementation plan, which was expected to be ready by now and to have been presented today in the Council. Because, based on their experience with the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, Serb representatives do not see how they can in any way influence this document, they do not participate in the working groups drafting the plan. Unfortunately, UNMIK has not found a way to make this process all-inclusive. Hence, it is already apparent that the plan will serve to further divide the communities in Kosovo and Metohija and their political representatives, instead of bringing them at least at little closer.

Again, UNMIK is complaining about the so-called parallel institutions and criticizing my Government for their existence. We therefore once again have to reiterate that the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and UNMIK have not provided alternatives to the Serbian community.

UNMIK has also failed so far to persuade the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government to move forward with regard to the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. My Government has repeatedly expressed its readiness to begin this dialogue within the envisaged four working groups. There were — and there are — no ambiguities in that respect. It is clear which side is delaying the process. It is therefore unfair, to say the least, to imply that problems concerning the dialogue exist on both sides, as the report suggests.

As for relations between my Government and UNMIK, we would like to see the Common Document of 5 November 2001 implemented and the activities of the high-level working group revived. This is an important element in the overall context of the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999) and should not be marginalized, as is now the case.

Although the standards implementation plan has not yet been finalized, we are already steadily moving towards a tentative date for the comprehensive review of the standards in mid-2005. Then — or at a somewhat later date, as the Council may determine — talks about a political solution for Kosovo and Metohija will commence in one form or another. Until then, if any sustainable solution is to be found, every effort should be made to create conditions that will allow the representatives of the two major communities and all other communities in the province to talk to each other about their present and their future. They are too far away from that point now. Currently, all the political, economic and social advantages belong only to one community. The other side has none, sees very little hope and is becoming increasingly desperate.

UNMIK must take this reality into serious consideration and take measures to rectify this huge imbalance. If not, the end result will be a failure that nobody can afford.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Ireland. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): I would like first to join previous speakers in expressing our shock and strong condemnation of the bomb attack in Moscow this morning. I express our deep condolences to the Government and the people of the Russian Federation.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway declare that they align themselves with this statement.

As this is the first time that I have taken the floor under your presidency of the Security Council, Sir, please allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of your duties. I would also like to extend my congratulations to the previous President, Ambassador Muñoz of Chile, for the excellent manner in which he steered the Council's deliberations in January.

The Secretary-General's report, and Mr. Holkeri's comprehensive and cogent presentation, clearly set out the progress that has been achieved in Kosovo so far, as well as the many challenges that remain to be tackled.

I would like to underscore the European Union's strong support for Special Representative Holkeri in his task of implementing in full Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), and UNMIK's policy of "standards before status". These remain the foundation of the international community's commitment to Kosovo. We urge all the parties, including those in the region, to cooperate fully with the Special Representative in a constructive and committed manner. The European Union has a long-term commitment to Kosovo. We look forward to close cooperation with the United Nations with a view to ensuring that United Nations-led "Standards for Kosovo" process and the EU-initiated process to prepare Kosovo for further moves towards the Union are mutually reinforcing.

The European Union welcomes the progress which has been achieved in such areas as the rule of law, freedom of movement, returns and minority rights. While this progress is encouraging, it is clear that successful implementation of "Standards for Kosovo" requires further effort on the part of all the parties.

In particular, it needs the political will and genuine commitment of Kosovo's leaders. All of Kosovo's leaders must uphold the practical application of the values of multi-ethnicity, tolerance and equal rights for all communities. As the Secretary-General has noted in his report, the way forward lies in making progress on the benchmarks set out in the "Standards for Kosovo" document. The focus should be on improving the daily lives of all the people of Kosovo. Belgrade must play its part here, too.

The establishment of a mechanism to measure the progress made in meeting the standards is a significant development. The "Standards for Kosovo" document is an essential first step, and the task now is to build on this foundation. The EU Commission's annual reviews could be useful here in determining a common international assessment of the progress made. Other EU instruments, such as the European Partnerships, could also play a role by ensuring that the provisional Government allocates financial and personnel resources to meet the requirements in the "Standards for Kosovo" process.

The immediate priority is the completion of the implementation work plan, and we look forward to its early submission. We strongly urge all parties, including the Kosovo Serbs, to engage fully in the process of finalizing the "standards before status" implementation plan. We also urge the authorities in Belgrade to encourage Kosovo Serb participation in this process. A first opportunity for an overall review of progress made could occur in mid-2005, or earlier if sufficient movement has taken place.

Although the submission of the work plan will be an important step forward, the process of implementing the standards is not dependent on the plan's completion. For their part, the Provisional Institutions must meet their responsibility for making coherent and sustainable progress on implementing the standards. We note that the transfer of non-reserved responsibilities under Chapter 5 of the Constitutional Framework is largely complete. The Provisional Institutions must now concentrate on implementing those responsibilities fully and fairly, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and the Constitutional Framework.

It is a matter of concern, as the Secretary-General has pointed out, that not all ethnic communities participate meaningfully in the Provisional Institutions: the presidency, the Government and the Kosovo Assembly. The Assembly must take into account legitimate minority concerns in the legislative process, and it should be scrupulously careful not to overstep its competencies. Likewise, illegal parallel administrative structures in Kosovo damage the cause of a multi-ethnic society. Support for parallel structures should cease, and an alternative to them must be found to ensure that all Kosovo's citizens get the same levels of social and administrative services.

Serbia and Montenegro plays a crucial role in efforts to stabilize the region and with respect to the implementation of standards and the future status of Kosovo. It is in the interest of all parties to facilitate their commitment and contribution.

The European Union believes that the direct dialogue initiated on 14 October 2003 in Vienna is a central plank of the "Standards for Kosovo" policy. All parties concerned need to engage constructively in the working groups as the follow-up to the Vienna

meeting. Multi-ethnic delegations to the four working groups of the political dialogue should be established by the Provisional Institutions as soon as possible. Delays in starting the working groups are detrimental to progress on the standards.

The European Union is committed to the goal of a stable, multi-ethnic and democratic Kosovo within its place in Europe. Last November, the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs reaffirmed the European Union's readiness to assist in the achievement of that objective, in the context of the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and of "Standards for Kosovo". In that spirit, ministers mandated High Representative Solana to prepare a report in close coordination with the Commission and in cooperation with Special Representative Holkeri. That report should explore ways and means to further enhance the European Union's contribution to the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999), taking full account of the Stabilization and Association Process Tracking Mechanism and of the importance of effective implementation of the standards implementation plan. European Union foreign ministers are scheduled to consider the report later this month.

The European Union is firmly committed to supporting Kosovo's economic reconstruction and development. In his report the Secretary-General sets out the scale of the task of tackling unemployment and infrastructural deficits and of creating a positive climate for investment. Economic progress is essential for the creation of a tolerant, multi-ethnic and democratic Kosovo.

Through the EU pillar of UNMIK, Pillar IV, the European Union is assisting in the revitalization of economic activity in Kosovo with a view to the creation of the conditions for a modern, open-market economy. The aim is to establish a sustainable private sector, one that will create employment. The long-term perspective is to bring Kosovo's legislative and administrative frameworks closer to European standards.

The European Agency for Reconstruction continues to finance and manage sustainable reconstruction and development programmes in Kosovo under the guidance of the European Commission. Future progress will depend on structural reforms in Kosovo, including legislative and institutional efforts, as well as sound fiscal and budget policies. The European Union is disturbed that local members are boycotting Kosovo Trust Agency board meetings, thus preventing the privatization of socially owned enterprises that are ready for transfer to successful bidders. Also, we hope that the issue of liability of Agency officials can be resolved quickly. Successful privatization will be a crucial factor for economic growth and development. We urge the Provisional Institutions to engage constructively in that process.

Finally, as the Secretary-General notes, UNMIK's work can continue only if the necessary funding in crucial areas is available. For its part, the European Union is the largest donor of financial support in Kosovo, and we encourage others to consider as a priority how they can deepen their assistance to Kosovo in the various areas set out in the Secretary-General's report.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Ireland for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Albania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nesho (Albania): At the outset, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to express to the people and the Government of the Russian Federation our sympathy and our most sincere condolences with respect to the terrorist acts that took place earlier today in Moscow. We strongly condemn such brutal terrorist attacks.

I would like to join other delegations in expressing our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report and in thanking Mr. Holkeri, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his comprehensive briefing. We are pleased to welcome him today and to commend him for his work. We will continue to support his efforts and those of the international community in this new and important phase of their mission in Kosovo. We are certain that Mr. Holkeri's leadership will help to maintain the momentum and the positive trend of significant progress that Kosovo has made in the past four years.

My Government welcomes the transfer of non-reserved competences to the Provisional Institutions, in conformity with Chapter 5 of the Constitutional Framework. That is a good step forward, which should

be followed by further and closer cooperation between the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the local institutions. Better participation by the institutions in the decision-making process and better policy coordination will be beneficial to both parties. In particular, those elements will improve the institutions' effectiveness and their capacity to respond to the needs of Kosovo's citizens.

The Albanian Government reaffirms its support for the "Standards for Kosovo" document, which bolsters the efforts of the international community to build a democratic society and a stable Kosovo through the implementation of the standards. The standards implementation plan, which clearly defines the time frame for the progress to be achieved, is also a most welcome development. We are confident and optimistic that it will help Kosovo to make progress as soon as possible towards a final resolution of its status. In that context, we regret to emphasize the lack of participation and cooperation by Serb minorities in the various working groups for the preparation of the implementation plan. Their presence and participation are not only desirable and important, but also necessary in building a democratic, multi-ethnic society.

Albania praises the first steps already taken in the dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade on technical matters. The Albanian Government will continue to bring its influence to bear on the political and institutional actors in Kosovo and to encourage them to continue their cooperation and to participate in discussions at the level of the technical working groups. We consider this a productive way of resolving the problems and practical issues faced by the people of both countries in their daily lives. On the other hand, we deem unacceptable and damaging any attempt that goes beyond the stabilizing framework of the dialogue.

Albania believes that the continuing existence of parallel structures in Kosovo is a source of very serious concern. They represent a serious impediment to the strengthening of legitimate local institutions and to the exercise of their full jurisdiction, and to the continuity of the democratic process in Kosovo.

The arrest warrants issued by such institutions, as parallel courts, against Kosovar leaders are unacceptable acts which can only cause uncertainty among the people of Kosovo and do harm to the process of building a multi-ethnic society there.

We consider well thought out and reasonable UNMIK's position, following the December elections in Serbia, of not allowing officials of Kosovo institutions simultaneously to hold a post in Kosovo and have a mandate in Serbia.

We are of the opinion that the progress made in economic and structural reform in Kosovo is of great importance for fostering stability and development within that society. In that context, we support the resumption of the process of privatization as a key element with a great impact on economic development.

We all agree that 2004 is going to be a challenging year for Kosovo. It is our conviction that the trend of change and constant progress will continue; that democratic institutions and the rule of law will function more effectively; and that the important process of returns, representation and participation, based on the current achievements and willingness of the Kosovo leadership, will continue and be successful.

Given the progress achieved and the positive efforts of the international community, it is our conviction that Kosovo will increasingly share the common aspiration for integration into the region and into the European family, to which, geographically, historically and culturally, it belongs.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Albania for the kind words he addressed to me.

I now give the floor to Mr. Holkeri to respond to comments.

Mr. Holkeri: I would like to express my profound appreciation for the support we have received today for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) as well as for the high assessment of the activities of the Mission. Without the Council's strong support, we would never have achieved the progress that has been made so far, and we would not have been able to complete our task. I thank the Council for this. I am particularly grateful for the support that the Council has provided for the standards implementation process.

I shall now endeavour to respond to Council members' questions.

The Permanent Representative of Pakistan and other members of the Council justifiably urged UNMIK

to speed up the drawing up of the implementation work plan. Let me say that we are well aware of the urgency of producing that document expediently. UNMIK, in consultation with the Provisional Institutions, is working on this intensively. We need to have an effective document of high quality, and this requires a very thorough effort. We strongly hope to be able to present the work plan to the Council very soon.

The representative of Benin, among others, raised the issue of whether there was a study on the interaction between the Kosovo Police Service and the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC). As the Council is aware, the responsibility of the KPC is to prevent and deal with the consequences of civil emergencies. In that respect, its activities are supported by the Kosovo Police Service. That was the case, for example, during the 2002 earthquake in Gnjilane and the fire in Kosovo's so-called "B" power station. The organizations occasionally share the use of training facilities. We have not come across any cases of relations of a criminal nature between the two organizations.

As concerns the observation made by the Russian representative, who stressed the crucial importance of upholding the standards, allow me to assure the Council that watering down the standards is not an option — not for anyone, and especially not for me. The implementation plan will spell out the actions needed to reach standards and will not in any way alter the standards as already announced in the "Standards for Kosovo" document.

As regards the comment made by the representative of Spain regarding the deadline for the production of the implementation plan, let me make clear that work to implement the standards is already ongoing; what is missing is the plan on paper.

Nevertheless, I understand the Council's desire to see a work plan as quickly as possible. I share that desire, and intensive work in this respect is ongoing in Kosovo.

I hope also that it is understood that the best way forward is partnership between UNMIK and the Provisional Institutions. The reality is that we share a Government in Kosovo, and I think it right that we should work together to produce the implementation plan.

The representative of France specifically highlighted the responsibility of the Provisional Institutions for the implementation of standards. I should like to emphasize that, while standards were developed to assess the progress of the institutions, implementation will be a joint UNMIK-Provisional Institutions of Self-Government exercise, not least because a clear separation exists between the reserved and transferred responsibilities, both of which are essential for the progress of Kosovo. At the same time, within the implementation work plan, there will be a clear separation of responsibilities between UNMIK and the Provisional Institutions. This will also allow us effectively to monitor their progress.

I turn now to the comment made by the representative of Serbia and Montenegro. I have made careful note of the concerns expressed by him. May I say that those concerns are being addressed on the ground in Kosovo on a daily basis. We would welcome constructive cooperation from Belgrade in dealing with concrete issues that affect the Kosovo Serb community, not least its participation in the standards implementation process. On that point, it is simply unjustified to argue that Kosovo Serb concerns will be ignored in the production of the standards implementation work plan. The Provisional Institutions and I have repeatedly made it clear that Kosovo Serbs are welcome in all the implementation groups and we shall ensure that full and fair account is taken of their concerns. I repeat that reassurance here today. I would ask the representative of Serbia and Montenegro to convey that to Belgrade, along with the clear wish of the Council, expressed today, that they should participate.

I very much welcome the confirmation by the representative of Serbia and Montenegro of Belgrade's intention to engage in direct dialogue with Pristina. I really do hope that this will allow the talks to start without delay.

Allow me once again to thank all Council members for their support and I do hope that I, or somebody, will be back before them very soon, presenting the implementation working plan so that we can continue our work and target the real outcome for mid-2005.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4911

Security Council

Fifty-ninth year

Provisional

4911th meeting

Tuesday, 17 February 2004, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wang Guangya	(China)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Angola	Mr. Antonio
	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	Chile	Mr. Muñoz
	France	Mr. de La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Philippines	Mr. Mercado
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

Security Council mission

Progress report of the Secretary-General on the recommendations of the Security Council mission to Central Africa (S/2004/52)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

04-24136 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Progress report of the Secretary-General on the recommendations of the Security Council mission to Central Africa (S/2004/52)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Burundi, Egypt, Ireland, Japan, Rwanda and the Syrian Arab Republic, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Tuliameni Kalomoh, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2004/52, which contains the progress report of the Secretary-General on the recommendations of the Security Council mission to Central Africa.

I now give the floor to Mr. Tuliameni Kalomoh, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

Mr. Kalomoh: Thank you very much, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting and for allowing me to introduce the progress report of the Secretary-General on the recommendations of the Security Council mission to Central Africa (S/2004/52), which is before members. The report summarizes advances attained in addressing the recommendations made on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on Burundi and on preparations for an international conference on the Great Lakes region.

With regard to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as Council members are aware, the transitional Government was established in June 2003, at about the same time as the Council mission was visiting the region. The transitional Government's comprehensive programme of work for the transitional period was approved by the new Parliament in December, and the implementation of that work programme is well under way.

Progress has also been made in normalizing relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours, but much needs to be done in that area, with the support of the international community. The pace of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and resettlement or repatriation of Rwandese, Ugandan and Burundian armed elements has accelerated beyond even our own expectations. The International Committee in Support of the Transition has been meeting in Kinshasa on a regular basis, under the chairmanship of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The Committee has been instrumental in resolving several deadlocks that had arisen between and among the parties.

With regard to the situation in the Ituri district, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) assumed responsibility from the Interim Emergency Multinational Force on 1 September 2003, following the adoption by the Council of resolution 1493 (2003). In Bunia, MONUC has been enforcing a weapons-free policy, and the first phase of the Mission's military expansion outside Bunia is now under way. It should be recalled that MONUC's military deployments in Ituri are intended to stabilize the region to enable the Ituri Interim Administration to begin functioning and to facilitate its integration into the national transitional process.

Concerning support for the reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a Consultative Group meeting of the country's development partners was held on 17 and 18 December 2003 in Paris. At that meeting, donor countries and organizations pledged more than $3.9 billion in assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the period 2004-2006.

I now turn to the situation in Burundi. As described in the report before the Council, significant progress has been achieved towards implementation of the recommendations of the Council mission. The deployment of the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) was completed in October 2003, and the Mission has been carrying out outstanding work. However, in spite of the vital support and financial contributions provided by a number of donors, AMIB continues to face serious financial and logistical difficulties. United Nations agencies in Bujumbura, with political guidance from the United Nations Office in Burundi, are assisting AMIB within their respective mandates. In the area of donor assistance for economic recovery, at a forum of the development partners of Burundi held in Brussels in mid-January this year donors pledged a total of $1 billion to support Burundi's socio-economic recovery in the period 2004-2006.

The prospects for peace in Burundi improved considerably with the conclusion of a comprehensive ceasefire agreement between the transitional Government and the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie — Forces nationales pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD) of Pierre Nkurunziza and the subsequent integration of FDD representatives into the transitional institutions. The implementation of the agreement has so far proceeded well.

As Council members may be aware, since the publication of the report, President Ndayizeye of Burundi and a high-level Forces nationales de libération (FNL) (Rwasa) delegation met, for the first time, in the Netherlands from 18 to 21 January 2004, thus providing further grounds for optimism. The Secretary-General urged the parties to pursue these discussions with a view to having the FNL join the peace process as soon as possible, thus paving the way for the establishment of a full-fledged peacekeeping operation in Burundi.

As noted elsewhere in the report, the challenges that lie ahead in Burundi are enormous, as the transitional period is expected to end in November 2004. I take this opportunity to inform the Council that the United Nations multidisciplinary reconnaissance mission is set to arrive in Bujumbura today to examine the situation on the ground and assess how the transitional Government can best be supported in order to ensure the successful conclusion of the peace process — bearing in mind that this process will end with the elections in November 2004.

As noted in the report, advances achieved in the peace processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi over the past six months have created a new momentum in favour of convening an international conference on the Great Lakes region. In this connection, since the launching of the conference's preparatory process in June 2003, a number of important steps have been taken with the support of the United Nations, the African Union and donor countries.

The core countries' National Coordinators have so far held three meetings to discuss the objectives, themes and structure of the conference. As a result, the outline of the conference has started to take shape. Another important development was the setting up of the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes region, which will be an important partner throughout the preparatory process and the actual holding of the conference.

Under a revised timetable approved by the National Coordinators of the core countries last month, the conference's first summit is scheduled for November 2004, in the United Republic of Tanzania. However, as noted in the progress report, the increased level of activities in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region requires additional staff resources for that Office. The preparatory process risks being delayed, or even seriously affected, by any lack of necessary budgetary provisions for staff and other resources for the Office of the Special Representative.

As described fully in the Secretary-General's progress report and reflected in my remarks today, substantial progress has been made in the peace processes in both Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo since the Security Council mission to the region last June. However, much remains to be done to consolidate these historic advances and to build sustainable peace in the region as a whole. The international community's commitment to continue supporting peace efforts in the subregion is therefore as critical as ever.

The reports we have received from the region indicate that the parties greatly appreciate the visit of the Security Council mission to the region, as it provided an added impetus encouraging the parties to fulfil their commitments to the peace process in both Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The parties, as well as countries visited by the mission such as South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda, welcomed the mission as an encouragement to the parties and Governments in the countries involved to continue to support the peace process in both Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Kalomoh for his statement.

I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes, in accordance with the understanding reached among Council members and in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when addressing the Council.

Mr. de La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Kalomoh for his briefing and the Secretary-General for his report. In a short while Ireland will be making a statement on behalf of the member States of the European Union, and we completely support that statement.

The Security Council mission to Central Africa and the Great Lakes region last June, which I had the honour of leading, was in the region at a decisive time for the two peace processes. I think it can be said that in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as in Burundi, in the space of eight months considerable work has been accomplished. I will refer to both situations, starting with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

At the time of our visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the problems in that country were particularly grave. The transition agreement was threatening to unravel, the eastern part of the country was once again the scene of violence and armed offensives, and peace was at risk. Thanks to the efforts of all, major progress was accomplished. The transitional Government of national unity was established on 30 June 2003, in accordance with the solemn commitment undertaken by President Kabila before members of the Security Council. The question of high military command was resolved and the relations of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with Uganda and Rwanda considerably improved. That was a point to which members of the Council had given particular attention. Thanks to Operation Artemis and to the strengthening of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), hostilities have, to a great extent, come to an end in the east.

Nonetheless, insecurity does remain. Last week a Kenyan MONUC observer was murdered in Ituri in the exercise of his duties. I wish to reiterate France's condolences to his family, to his loved ones and to the Kenyan Government. Everything must be done so that the perpetrators of this crime do not go unpunished. MONUC, which now has a robust mandate, must make the militias understand that such actions will no longer be tolerated. Furthermore, in this context it is essential to strengthen the monitoring of the arms embargo. An end must be put to the trafficking thanks to which armed groups keep the region in a state of instability.

However, this tragic event must not obscure the results that have been obtained in recent months in disarmament and in the repatriation of foreign combatants. True, much of the road still remains ahead of us. We must succeed in particular in the reintegration of Congolese combatants, who in some cases will rejoin civilian life, and in other cases, the new armed forces and the police. In that regard, I pay tribute to Belgium, which for several weeks now has been conducting in Kisangani the training of the first integrated brigade of the new Congolese army.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is entering a new and delicate period. The war is officially over, but a great deal remains to be done to complete national reconciliation. Elections must be held in June 2005 as scheduled. It is at times such as these that we must be careful that our attention does not wane. The Congolese must continue their efforts, and the international community must help them and support the efforts of Mr. Swing, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who was with the Council last week. We greatly appreciate his efforts, and his briefing and the action he is taking.

The Council mission returned from Burundi with high hopes. It seemed to us that all the parties to the transition were filled with a sincere desire for peace,

reconciliation and reform. Despite the hardships that hit the country hard during the summer, that desire prevailed in the end. The agreement that the international community urged was concluded with Mr. Nkurunziza's Forces pour la défense de la démocratie, which has now taken its place in the transitional authorities. For their part, the Forces nationales de libération of Mr. Rwasa have begun to evince a constructive attitude, and initial discussions took place last month in the Netherlands. Of course, that progress remains to be solidified, but it is encouraging. To facilitate those talks, we are counting very much on the efforts of the States of the facilitation and regional peace initiative and, in particular, on the involvement of South Africa.

We pay tribute to the remarkable mobilization that Africa has demonstrated. The African Union decided to deploy to Burundi its first peacekeeping mission. That operation, which has support from the European Union, will be crucial to consolidating the ceasefire. In due course, we will have to study the conditions under which a United Nations operation could carry on from it.

I wish to refer briefly to the question of the international conference. The crises in Central Africa and in the Great Lakes region cannot be understood in isolation. Borders have they stopped neither armed rebel movements nor military interventions by States. Nor have they stopped trafficking weapons or in natural resources. We know that an effective and lasting solution to the problem must be regional in scope. That is also the objective of the international conference now being prepared. As we have already said, to be successful, this conference must be open to the participation of all neighbours of the Congo and Burundi, without exception. It must thus include, we believe, Angola, the Central African Republic, the Republic of the Congo and the Sudan. It must also focus on the fundamental issues of security and regional economic cooperation. It is essential that the first summit produce concrete results in the fields of peace, security and good-neighbourliness; those results will consolidate the peace and reconciliation processes.

I believe that the Council mission to Central Africa, whose results we are assessing today, was useful in a number of ways. It helped Council members in their work by giving them concrete knowledge of the processes under way. It encouraged the Council's unity and strengthened the Council's message to the parties. Mr. Kalomoh has told us that the mission was warmly welcomed in the region. I believe it has also helped the Council more effectively to support the work of the Secretary-General and his special representatives. I pay tribute to them and to all United Nations personnel who, with them, are working for peace in the region.

Mr. Antonio (Angola) (*spoke in French*): We too thank you, Mr. President, for organizing today's meeting on Central Africa. We also thank Mr. Kalomoh for the briefing he has just given the Council. We believe that this meeting is being held at a crucial time and that we should seize the opportunity offered by the hope for peace in Central Africa.

This meeting is being held not long after we had the privilege of hearing Mr. Swing brief the Council on the progress made in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The peace process in that country has now gained speed: the efforts of the international community and the political will now being demonstrated by the transitional Government of national unity are cause for hope.

Nevertheless, with respect to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as was stated by the representative of France, there are still some grey areas that are cause for concern. I refer to areas in the east of the country, where there is still instability, violence, human rights violations and violations of the rights of women in particular. I think many of us have seen reports in the press about the situation of women in the eastern part of the country. We think that this very important, even crucial question requires our further attention.

As the representative of France stated, we need to see how to stop this violence, which could jeopardize a process that is moving in a positive direction. The representative of France mentioned the murder of a Kenyan observer. We think all these elements require us to formulate a strategy with respect to the armed groups in the east of the country. Perhaps the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) should focus on this, as was done in Ituri and, in West Africa, in Côte d'Ivoire. There, a strategy had to be designed for a given area in order to provide the proper response to a specific situation.

The arms embargo is another aspect deserving the Council's attention. We know that weapons are not free; they are bought with the very resources of the

Democratic Republic of the Congo. Those two aspects are closely linked and deserve the Council's attention.

When the Council adopted resolution 1522 (2004), it stated that reform of the security and defence sectors was crucial to the process. We welcome that fact that some countries are already extending assistance. We also welcome the efforts of MONUC. We think that this question as well is decisive for the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

With respect to Burundi, we all recall the appeal made in the Council Chamber by Deputy President Zuma of South Africa. We recall that he specifically requested the deployment of a United Nations force to Burundi. We think that such a proposal is of interest at a time when we are overseeing this risk-filled transitional period. Such support is crucial.

We welcome the fact that the Council mission visited Burundi, and hope that it will now make recommendations that can respond to all the questions we are now asking with respect to the deployment of a United Nations force. But at the same time, we need to remember that the African Union force has confronted enormous problems — without the support of the international community. The difficulties encountered by the force could have a negative impact on the process itself.

As is always the case with regard to situations of conflict, the return of peace to Burundi has given rise to new economic and social problems. We again call upon the international community to ensure that the appeal that has been launched is properly supported and that resources are provided to the Government of Burundi. We must also encourage a positive attitude on the part of the Bretton Woods institutions and the non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies which are currently involved in seeking solutions in Burundi.

With regard to coordination within the United Nations, we believe that the question of Burundi still merits attention and that cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council could make a difference there. Such was the case in Guinea-Bissau, and we believe that we could take advantage of the efforts of the Economic and Social Council, which has set up an Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi, chaired by the representative of South Africa. We believe that that is an important instrument. It, too, carried out a mission to the region and made some important recommendations. Instruments such as the Advisory Group and the Security Council Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa could prove useful in this situation.

Members may recall that when it analysed the interim report of the multidisciplinary assessment mission to Central Africa headed by Assistant Secretary-General Kalomoh (S/2003/1077), the Council concluded that a regional approach was important with regard to Central Africa. Thus, our ongoing discussions about West Africa are of importance as we consider the question of Central Africa. It is a region where the majority of countries are in a post-conflict situation — or have experienced conflict fairly recently — and thus need an appropriate approach to be taken. That said, however, our discussions, and the recommendations of the Security Council mission, should not be isolated from the recommendations made by the multidisciplinary mission headed by Mr. Kalomoh.

Furthermore, regional efforts are under way with regard to integration and the quest for political solutions. The eleventh summit meeting of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) was held last month in Brazzaville. That summit was seen as a turning point for the revival of ECCAS. We believe that the summit took some important steps, including the establishment of a free trade zone. It also decided to establish a regional brigade to tackle threats to peace. The implementation of that decision will be carried out by Angola, Gabon, the Congo and Sao Tome and Principe. We believe that those initiatives need our support.

We also welcome the preparations for an international conference on the Great Lakes region. As is well known, Zambia has been admitted as the seventh core country and Angola, the Central African Republic and the Republic of the Congo have been admitted as co-opted countries, while Egypt has been admitted as an observer country. We continue to hope that the neighbouring countries of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi will play an active role with regard to the conference.

At this stage, we believe that, in the light of the conclusions that have been arrived at through the regional approach and given the link between development and the quest for peace, United Nations

attention to the question of Central Africa is of great importance. During the public debate that was held on the interim report of the multidisciplinary mission to Central Africa (see S/PV.4871), the representative of ECCAS welcomed the proposal to appoint a special representative for the region and expressed the hope that discussions would continue, that the time would come when the United Nations presence would be strengthened in the region — for all the reasons we have outlined, taking advantage of the window of opportunity — and that such discussions would lead to the establishment of a United Nations office there.

Those are some of the points that we wanted to share with the Council at this stage. We have spoken at some length, but we have been speaking from our heart as well as from our head. We share in the problems of the region — we are a member of the Economic Community of Central African States — so our statement today has been somewhat longer than those of other speakers.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Africa is on the Security Council agenda for the fourth time in February — the fourth time in less than three weeks. That frequency — testimony to the importance that the Council attaches to African issues — is to the credit of the Council, and, in particular, to the credit of China, your fine country, Sir, which is known to be a good friend of Africa.

We would like to thank Mr. Kalomoh, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, for his outstanding briefing, as well as the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report that he has submitted to us (S/2004/52). That timely report paints a realistic picture of the situation in Central Africa and of the relevant actions undertaken to implement the recommendations of the Security Council mission.

Since the return of the mission, we have observed significant progress in the transition process both in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi, as well as tangible signs of peace and reconciliation that show the political will of the two Governments and of others involved in the peace process to break the cycle of missed opportunities and make a real commitment to peace.

We welcome the peaceful changeover that took place in Bujumbura, which made it possible to begin, without incident, the second part of the transition period, as provided for in the Arusha Peace Agreement, as well as the inauguration in Kinshasa of a Government of national reconciliation in accordance with the comprehensive and inclusive agreement. Those major events were a decisive turning point in the peace process in those two countries. The obstacles that remain to be overcome are considerable. They require that all the parties redouble their efforts to meet the timetables established, in order to put a definitive end to the conflict.

At this current crucial stage, those two countries deserve to be encouraged and supported in their efforts to build a lasting peace for the well-being of their respective populations. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi, referendums under conditions of transparency and credibility are the cornerstone of the peace process and require that the agreed measures be implemented quickly, in particular the establishment in both countries of national armies under unified command, and improvement of the security situation, which is necessary in order to organize the elections.

We welcome the commitment undertaken by the transitional Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to make considerable progress, before the first anniversary of its establishment, in the establishment and functioning of the various elements of the security forces, including the police, the close protection corps and the army. If respected, that commitment should provide even more encouraging results with regard to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) in the country, the progress of which is not meeting our expectations.

We encourage the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to define clear priorities, in spite of the many measures it must undertake in order to make more visible the country's progress towards holding the scheduled elections. We are also pleased to see the renewed commitment of donors to continue their support for the transition process, through various programmes in identified sectors, in agreement with the transitional Government.

In that regard we welcome the very efficient role of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), and in particular its redeployment in eastern Congo to improve the security situation there. We are gratified by the constant improvement in relations between the Congo and its neighbouring countries, and in particular

by the creation of bilateral structures of cross-border cooperation to resolve shared security problems.

Concerning Burundi, while there are grounds for hope in the recent peaceful transition and the admission into the Government in December 2003, of the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces nationales pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD), the situation, in our view, remains of great concern due to continued fighting around rural Bujumbura and in the north-western part of the country, in spite of the decision taken in early January 2004 by officials of the Palipehutu-FNL (Rwasa) to enter into direct talks with the transitional Government. Today we urgently appeal to the rebel forces to lay down their arms and to join the peace process taking place in Burundi so that it can succeed according to the established timetable.

We urge the international community, which has shown remarkable generosity in its solidarity with Burundi within the partners development forum which took place in Brussels in early January 2004, to use all of its influence to attain a comprehensive ceasefire in Burundi as soon as possible.

In that regard, it is important that the help promised to Burundi be promptly mobilized in order to support the peace process as a whole, and that such help, above all, contribute to financing the implementation of DDR programmes that are now under way in liaison with the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB). We welcome the constructive role played by AMIB, which has concretely proven the determination of the African Union to work resolutely to solve the conflicts that are afflicting the continent. With regard to the deadlines and the need to speed up the peace process, it is urgent that the Security Council consider the request of the Government of Burundi and of the facilitation and regional initiative for Burundi to transform AMIB into a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

All the efforts to stabilize the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi cannot assure a sustainable peace in those countries unless they are accompanied by a comprehensive improvement in the situation among the countries of the Great Lakes region. We therefore welcome the considerable progress already made in the framework of preparations for an international conference on the Great Lakes region, and in particular the establishment of the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes region.

My delegation supports the Secretary-General's recommendations on strengthening the resources available to the Office of his Special Representative for the Great Lakes region to allow him to complete preparations for the conference as soon as possible. It is important today to take the opportunity of the progress already made in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi and the hopes for national reconciliation that it raises to expedite the holding of this long-awaited international conference on the Great Lakes region. We are of the view that the conference will help to capitalize on the current dynamic of peace to achieve the stabilization of the whole subregion in order to promote integrated regional development through the rational use of its resources to bring well-being and prosperity to its peoples.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): Thank you, Mr. President, for your initiative in convening this meeting. I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Tuliameni Kalomoh for introducing the progress report of the Secretary-General (S/2004/52).

The situation in Central Africa has been one of the main concerns of the Security Council over the years. More recently, there have been several positive developments in the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the transitional Government has been working steadily for more than seven months, the transitional Assembly is now operational and the International Committee in Support of the Transition is meeting regularly. The Security Council authorized a strengthened presence and mandate for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), which has been supporting the rule of law, police reform and the organization of elections. The Council has also authorized the transitional Government to deploy its armed forces to Kisangani, which is a further step towards extending national authority over the territory, and has agreed to impose an arms embargo in the Kivu and Ituri regions. We certainly welcome those developments.

Last week, we had the opportunity to listen to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador William Lacy Swing, on the latest events in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As a result,

we were better able to assess recent achievements and to weigh the series of measures still required for stabilization.

In that connection, my delegation is deeply saddened by the tragic death of a Kenyan MONUC military observer in an ambush in Ituri. We urge the United Nations, in cooperation with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to strive to bring to justice all those responsible for that criminal act.

In Burundi we were pleased to note that the delegation of Palipehutu-FNL (Rwasa) and President Ndayizeye met in the Netherlands last month. Though not conclusive, that initiative clearly confirms that dialogue is the only way to solve differences in the country. It sets the path for Agathon Rwasa's movement to join the "camp of peace", as stated in paragraph 62 of the Secretary-General's report.

My delegation must nevertheless express serious concern over the human rights situation in Burundi. Too many violations continue to be reported, and the Security Council has not been sufficiently responsive. It has been well over a year since the Council was requested by the Burundian President to consider establishing an international commission of judicial inquiry, and it was only in January that the terms of reference of the assessment mission were agreed upon by the Council.

Despite difficulties on the ground, the mission deployed by the African Union in Burundi is working very effectively with the Government institutions and United Nations agencies. We commend its work and call upon the international community to provide further technical and financial support to the mission. This need will be made even clearer when we receive in the near future the report of the multidisciplinary United Nations mission that is expected to arrive today in Burundi to assess the needs of the country in all fields.

Since the Council has been considering the individual situation of each country in Central Africa, I wish to concentrate the last part of my remarks today on two points: development and regional dialogue.

We consider that initiatives to create a healthy economic environment are central if a peace-building process is to be sustainable in the long run. We cannot commit massive international efforts to the quest for peace only to see them crumble for lack of enough attention to economic stability and sustained development. In this connection, the rule of law in the exploitation of natural resources and the improvement of trade opportunities in the region cannot be overlooked.

As regards the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we concur with assessments made by the Panel of Experts that the time has come for institutional reforms to be undertaken in the area of regulation and control of natural resources now that the country is unified. "Illegal exploitation", as stated in the Secretary-General's report,

> "remains one of the main sources of funding for groups involved in perpetuating the conflict". (*S/2004/52, para. 19*)

In Burundi, the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group was impressed by the initiatives of the Burundian Government on sustainable development. My delegation is, however, disappointed that only 10 per cent of pledges made in 2000 and 2001 by the donor community have been disbursed to the country so far, as is mentioned in the report before us today. At this juncture, the Security Council should reinforce the Secretary-General's appeal for donor countries to accelerate disbursement.

The United Nations has an important role to play in conducting long-term initiatives on the road towards stabilization and development. That includes the Security Council, as well as its coordinated efforts with the Economic and Social Council. The cases of Guinea-Bissau and Burundi are good precedents that should be further developed. Moreover, the common efforts of countries of the region towards improving trade are a major step and we welcome initiatives that are being taken bilaterally by Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo's transitional Government.

That brings my delegation to the second point — regional dialogue. The Secretary-General has pointed out that prospects for convening the conference of the Great Lakes have significantly improved. Indeed, the organizational meeting held last month in Addis Ababa resulted in the decision to hold the first summit at the level of head of State in Tanzania in November this year and a second one in mid-2005. We commend the Special Representative of Secretary-General, Ibrahima Fall, and all the seven core countries for this important

development. We are confident that this dialogue will develop into a pact around the four main thematic areas targeted by the conference: peace and security, democracy and good governance, economic development and regional integration, and humanitarian and social issues.

We are also pleased by the interest shown by other countries in the initiative. Angola, the Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic are now working together with the core countries in the preparatory process for the convening of the international conference. The participation of neighbouring countries can only add to the success of the event. In addition, we welcome the comments made by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General that any other country outside the region that has shown interest in the process can be present as an observer — as Egypt is doing — so long as the core countries agree to the request made by the country concerned. Broadening participation beyond the subregional framework, without affecting the decision body, will certainly enhance the impact of the conference worldwide.

As we have seen when discussing the individual peace processes in Central Africa, the challenges ahead are enormous, but major accomplishments should not be discounted. To pave the way for sustainable peace in the region, we must pay due attention to its development component and give due support to African ownership and regional dialogue in post-conflict stabilization. This is where our cooperative action is most needed.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I wish to thank Mr. Tuliameni Kalomoh for his introduction to the Secretary-General's report on the Security Council mission to Central Africa.

My delegation considers this exercise to be timely and necessary because the Council's missions have become a fundamental instrument in its decision-making process and a clear demonstration of our interest in the processes under way in the countries we visit. In the case of Central Africa, the mission that was headed by Ambassador de La Sablière in June 2003 was the fourth since the Security Council resumed in 1999 its practice of sending missions to the field.

As some of the preceding speakers have already indicated, since the dispatch of the mission to Central Africa there have been encouraging signs of progress in the region. We welcome the progress made in the process of establishing the transitional Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Striking advances have also been made in the establishment of good-neighbourly relations and in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and resettlement process for the armed Ugandan, Rwandan and Burundian elements in the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In spite of the progress made at the national level, as we know, the situation in the Ituri district and in the Kivus has been characterized by instability and by ongoing grave abuses of human rights committed by various rebel movements. As has been noted here, the recent murder in Ituri of a Kenyan staff member of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo reminds us that instability and violence still prevail in the north-eastern part of the country. My country vigorously condemns acts of violence, murder and other such crimes perpetrated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular against the civilian population. Such acts must not go unpunished and the perpetrators must sooner or later answer for them. This is a challenge to the entire international community, but more fundamentally to the Congolese themselves and especially to the transitional Government.

We support the report's conclusions regarding the need for the transitional Government to establish clear priorities in order to ensure the political transition. In this context, the reform of the security sector, the consolidation of the rule of law, respect for human rights and the preparation for future general elections are priority objectives.

The situation in Burundi, for its part, has also seen important progress and the prospects for lasting peace have improved. Since the Council mission's visit to Bujumbura, we have witnessed the incorporation of the rebel movements Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces nationales pour la défense de la démocratie, headed by Pierre Nkurunziza, into the institutions of the provisional Government. It is our hope that the statement recently made by Agathon Rwasa, the leader of the Palipehutu-Forces nationales de libération movement, that he would enter into negotiations with the Government of President Ndayizeye will lead to the prompt incorporation of that movement into the Arusha peace process.

The challenges of Burundi's transition process continue to require the full attention and support of the Security Council and the rest of the international community. In that connection, the recommendations made by the mission remain fully valid — particularly the appeal to donor countries to honour the pledges made at the Paris and Geneva conferences. That is all the more necessary since there is a serious risk that the signs of peace that we are seeing on the horizon could recede if they are not accompanied by an improvement in the living conditions of Burundi's population.

The significant progress of the peace processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi provides an important impetus for the idea of holding an international conference on the Great Lakes region. We note with satisfaction the progress made over the past six months in designing and elaborating a process to promote substantive dialogue among the countries central to such a conference, the United Nations, the African Union and the donor community. The commencement of the preparatory process for a conference has led to an increase in the activities of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region — an office that unfortunately has neither the staff nor the budget necessary to meet the tasks that lie ahead. That requires that the Council analyse in detail the mandates of the various offices and missions in Central Africa in the light of the new scenario before us and that it determine whether adjustments are needed to improve their efficiency.

A firm and lasting peace in the region is today an inescapable imperative. An African continent that has economic stability and that invests in the development of its people would be a major contribution by the United Nations system. In the context of the United Nations, Chile has always supported solutions and initiatives aimed at promoting the interests of the African continent, first by promoting the decolonization process, later through the bodies created in the United Nations towards that end and, more recently, by providing troops from our country's armed forces for peace efforts in the region.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm the need to take the integrated approach with respect to Africa promoted by the Secretary-General. In that context, my country believes that the Security Council should consider in the coming months the possibility of organizing another mission to the Central African region. The objective of such a mission would be to assess on the ground the most urgent needs of the provisional Governments of Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo with respect to security sector reform, the establishment of the rule of law and the preparations for general elections at the end of 2004, at the beginning of 2005 and in June 2005.

Finally, we trust that the progress we have seen will be consolidated and improved upon with the full cooperation of the Organization.

Mr. Mercado (Philippines): My delegation joins other delegations in thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this public meeting to pursue continuity and follow-up with regard to the work of the Security Council in Central Africa. My delegation also expresses its appreciation to Assistant Secretary-General Kalomoh for his introduction of the Secretary-General's progress report (S/2004/52).

The Central African subregion is the heart of the continent, and its peace and stability have considerable impact on the entire region. The report of the Secretary-General is fittingly titled, since there has been significant progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the mission in the past seven months. The international community should capitalize on that positive momentum and should continue to build upon the achievements to date.

My delegation wishes to preface its statement by concurring with the view expressed by the multidisciplinary assessment mission that visited the Central African region from 8 to 22 June 2003 and concluded that

> "the prospects for positive change remain high, especially if the international community maintains and intensifies its partnership with subregional organizations, Governments and civil society groups to address the problems confronting Central Africa." (*S/2003/1077, p. 3*)

The Security Council mission led by France set out the direction and provided the impetus for progress in Central Africa. Despite the present challenges, the Council and the international community must sustain their efforts in the subregion. It is in that light that my delegation wishes to highlight the following.

Concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we wish to commend the Congolese, the United

Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the African Union, particularly the Troika — Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia — for the establishment of the transitional Government last June and for the subsequent actions undertaken to build the foundations for security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, notably the establishment of integrated army and police forces, as well as the formation of the National DDR Commission. Efforts to consolidate the authority of the transitional Government in the entire country, particularly in the eastern part, need to be accelerated. My delegation also hopes that efforts to halt the proliferation of arms and the illegal exploitation of natural resources will be intensified, given that those activities account for the continuation of conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In that regard, my delegation is confident that the Council will be able to adopt a resolution addressing those concerns.

My delegation agrees with the assessment made last week by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, William Lacy Swing, that the elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo set for 2005 can be carried out if the international community provides its robust support, particularly to the United Nations, which would be organizing its largest elections ever. Those historic elections would also be an opportunity to lay the groundwork for a positive political environment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in which the electorate would be able to make educated choices.

Concerning Burundi, my delegation is pleased to note that the prospects for peace in that country have improved. In that regard, we urge the transitional Government, the Burundians and the United Nations Office in Burundi to persevere in their efforts to further the peace process. The general insecurity and human rights abuses need to be addressed. Continued signs of peace are necessary to encourage the international community to accelerate the disbursement of pledges made at the Paris and Geneva conferences. As it is, we welcome the European Commission's announcement of the approval of $19 million in humanitarian aid for Burundi. We hope that that will encourage other donor countries to fulfil their pledges.

Application of the regional approach has never been more relevant than it is in the Great Lakes region. For years, the idea of an international conference on the Great Lakes region has been put forth, with no action being taken until now. It is thus gratifying to note from the Secretary-General's report that developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi have created new momentum in favour of such a conference, which could be held at the ministerial level by October of this year and at the summit level the following month. We hope that the change in the schedule for the conference, which was tentatively planned for June will provide enough time for the participating countries to consider the substance of the conference and to come up with concrete proposals to address the interlocking tragedies in Central Africa.

We commend the Group of Friends, co-chaired by Canada and the Netherlands, for its important role in providing political, diplomatic, technical and financial assistance in support of the preparatory process for a conference. We hope that all those efforts will lead to a security pact that will in turn lead to lasting and durable peace and stability in the Great Lakes region.

We must not forget that more than 3 million people have already died as a result of the conflict in Central Africa and that the complexity of the situation has hampered its effective resolution for far too long. In that regard, my delegation would support the additional allocation of resources to the Office of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region to ensure that it can effectively carry out its mandate and the regional tasks entrusted to it.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The representative of the Philippines is the only speaker so far today who made his statement in less than five minutes.

Mr. Khalid (Pakistan): First of all, Mr. President, we would like to commend your initiative in convening this meeting. We would also like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Kalomoh for presenting the Secretary-General's report (S/2004/52).

Since the Security Council mission visited Central Africa, a number of positive developments have taken place. These include an improvement of the political and security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, in Burundi, progress in the implementation of the Arusha Agreement, with the participation of the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie — Forces nationales pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD) in the transitional Government. There has also been an improvement in

the relations of the countries in the region, with the explicit desire of many of their leaders to move towards peace and reconciliation.

While we welcome these positive developments, we must also be aware that much more needs to be done to consolidate peace in the region. In this context, we condemn the brutal killing of a Kenyan military observer last week, and it is our hope that the perpetrators of this crime will be brought to justice.

It is obvious that in the Democratic Republic of the Congo progress is still required in the areas of security sector reform and the rule of law, as well as in the functioning of interim administrations, particularly in Ituri. While we welcome the holding of elections in May 2005, this must not be seen as an end in itself, but a means to an end.

Similarly, in Burundi, the peace process will not be complete without the inclusion in that process of all the factions, in particular the Forces nationales de libération (FNL) (Rwasa) faction. There is also a need to support the efforts of the African Union in Burundi, address the issues of transitional justice, which are a part of the Arusha Agreement, and help the badly battered Burundian economy stand on its feet.

The international community's goal in both Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo must remain the consolidation of peace and stability. One way to achieve this is by assisting both countries in the following areas: first, in extending their State authority; secondly, in carrying out meaningful security sector reform through the creation of a truly general national army and police; thirdly, in facilitating the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of combatants, both local and foreign; fourthly, in strengthening the rule of law and putting an end to impunity; fifthly, in addressing humanitarian issues; and sixthly, in promoting national economic reconstruction and rehabilitation.

The recent tragic history of the region has clearly demonstrated how easy it is for instability and conflict in one country to spill over into another. Borders are porous and do not make countries immune from the free flow of arms and fighters and worsening humanitarian situations. Such issues cannot be handled by any one country alone. A regional approach is, therefore, indispensable. However, such an approach must aim at improving the political relations between States and at helping them jointly resolve the challenges they face.

As part of this regional approach, Pakistan supports the convening of the international conference on the Great Lakes region proposed for later this year. The conference, however, must yield tangible results. This can only be accomplished if the countries of the region and their partners outside the region can work together a priori to identify realistic objectives, themes and structures. At the very least, this conference must yield agreement on confidence-building measures to help consolidate regional peace and stability.

At the same time, there are underlying issues of a cross-cutting nature that will have to be addressed, and not only within national or regional frameworks. Those issues are the following.

First, one of the root causes of instability in the region is poverty. There cannot be any peace without poverty alleviation. The humanitarian situation, the success of DDR and the consolidation of peace are not possible without sufficient generation of sustainable economic activity. The international community must continue to assist not only the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi, but also other countries in the region, to promote long-term socio-economic development.

Secondly, while greed may not have been the cause of conflict, it has been responsible for perpetuating it. There is an obvious and well-established link between the illegal exploitation of natural resources and the fuelling of conflicts in the subregion. The Secretary-General's report clearly states that "Illegal exploitation remains one of the main sources of funding for groups involved in perpetuating the conflict" (*S/2004/52, paragraph 19*). We must find those who finance these wars by buying, trading and engaging in the production and illegal exploitation of the region's natural resources. The extension of State authority and institutional reforms are imperative, as is the need for full disclosure of revenues earned from natural resources. We need a national, regional and global approach to address those issues.

Thirdly, the success of the peace process thus far has largely hinged on successful peacekeeping efforts — in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), and in Burundi by the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB).

Both missions these need to be supported and, if necessary, augmented by the United Nations. Pakistan, as a major United Nations troop-contributor, will continue to support such activities in the region.

Finally, on a policy level, the United Nations itself needs to act coherently in Central Africa in addressing the diverse requirements for consolidating peace and stability in the region. It is imperative to achieve greater coordination and synergy between the endeavours of the three principal organs of the United Nations — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council — in addressing the complex issues confronting the region. At the same time, the active engagement of non-governmental organizations, other United Nations agencies and, in particular, the international financial institutions is needed to bolster the whole effort. The idea suggested by Pakistan of ad hoc composite committees could be one means of building a comprehensive and coherent approach by the United Nations and the international community to complex crises.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful to Mr. Kalomoh for having introduced this very interesting report from the Secretary-General (S/2004/52), on which I would like to make a few brief comments.

Regarding the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the progress made in the peace process since the Security Council mission is encouraging. Nonetheless, it is essential that the transitional authorities make progress without delay in key areas such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants. They must also restructure the armed forces and undertake judiciary reform in order to put an end to impunity. All of this, of course, is with a view to holding free and democratic elections in June of next year.

With regard to Burundi, we welcome the progress made in recent months. We believe that the time has come to apply, without delay, the process of demobilization and disarmament and to tackle the restructuring of the armed forces. It is equally important that the necessary measures be taken for the establishment of the truth and reconciliation commission.

In connection with the future international conference on the Great Lakes region, we are pleased to note that during the meeting held in Addis Ababa, decisions were taken on participation in that conference and that progress is being made in clarifying its objectives, desired results and timetable. We thus encourage the participants in that process to continue their work, including the establishment of national preparatory committees by all participating States and the convening, as soon as possible, of an initial regional meeting of these committees, which will make it possible to further the preparations for the conference. Convening that conference and improving bilateral relations between countries of the region are positive initiatives that promote confidence-building measures and cooperation and strengthen the dynamic of peace being consolidated in the region.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Kalomoh for his excellent introduction of the progress report of the Secretary-General on Central Africa (S/2004/52). When we considered the report of the Secretary-General on West Africa (see S/PV.4899), I could not help drawing a parallel with Central Africa and noting the striking similarities between those two parts of the African continent. At that time, I stressed the importance of a regional approach, which we feel is the only one that can encourage the emergence of a climate of lasting peace and stability able to lift the countries of the region from the crises that undermine them and whose transborder ramifications are obvious.

I do not need to dwell on the considerable progress made in restoring peace and security in the countries of Central Africa, in particular in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Last week, we had an opportunity to assess the progress made towards national reunification and the establishment of the authority of national Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to note the encouraging signs of the normalization of that country's relations with its immediate neighbours.

In that regard, my delegation welcomes the efforts made to help the transitional authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to speed up the establishment of an integrated and unified national army and to establish a national police force. But at the same time, we voice our concern at the absence of clarity and progress in creating a national plan defining the modalities for achieving this twofold objective, which is closely linked to the fate of the process of demobilizing and reintegrating Congolese combatants.

My delegation also expresses its concern at the delay in completing the work on the legislation that is essential for the future of the peace process and the transitional institutions, in particular with regard to the establishment of a truth and reconciliation commission, the drawing up of electoral districts — which is of prime importance for the elections scheduled for June 2005 — media laws, the fight against corruption, human rights and combating impunity.

With respect to the situation in Ituri and the Kivus, which continues to poison relations between the various protagonists in the peace process in the country, my delegation welcomes the redeployment of the forces of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to that triangle where Congolese and foreign combatants are concentrated. We are encouraged by the results achieved in a relatively short span of time, in particular with respect to the return of foreign combatants to their countries of origin. We believe that strengthening the arms embargo will greatly contribute to efforts to pacify that part of the country. We take note of the links among arms trafficking, the illegal exploitation of natural resources and the continuation of the conflict and support the three-tier mechanism now before the Council for monitoring the embargo against arms flowing to that part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In Burundi, after the signing and gradual implementation of the ceasefire agreement, new prospects for the return of peace and security have emerged. The African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) has, in particularly difficult circumstances, helped greatly to stabilize the situation in the country. Important progress has been made, but numerous challenges remain before the holding of elections scheduled for next November at the latest.

It is high time the United Nations took on a role in Burundi. We believe that this should take the form of a peacekeeping mission to replace AMIB and support the peace process in the country until it is completed.

The example of MONUC's outstanding contribution to peace-building in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Mission's assistance in the process of preparing for elections and establishing rule-of-law institutions encourages us to advocate a greater international presence in Burundi, where the progress made in restoring peace remains very fragile because of the precarious economic and social situation, which is exacerbated by the flow of refugees and displaced persons and by the repatriation of combatants.

My delegation therefore welcomes the holding of the forum of the development partners of Burundi, held in Brussels on 13 and 14 January 2004. We hope that donors will speed up the release of pledged funds so that the transitional authorities can undertake reforms for restoring and strengthening peace in Burundi.

My delegation welcomes the initiative of the Secretary-General which on 25 September 2003 brought together heads of State and senior representatives of countries of the region, and we welcome the adoption by the participants in that meeting of a declaration on the principles of good-neighbourly relations and cooperation. That initiative strengthens our conviction that efforts should be made in the framework of a regional action strategy, something which has not so far been adequately explored by the international community.

From that perspective, my delegation considers the planned international conference on the Great Lakes region to be an irreplaceable framework for seeking solutions to the conflicts and the instability of the countries of Central Africa and for consolidating the peace process under way in the region.

My delegation expresses its satisfaction at the progress made towards holding this important event in November 2004 in Tanzania, and it encourages the countries of the region to continue their efforts to create the best conditions for success, including by initiating a substantive debate enabling the conference to achieve the desired results. My delegation welcomes the progress made at the meetings of the country coordinators for the countries concerned, in particular the progress made at the 19 December 2003 Nairobi meeting, which established the conference's structure, composition, objectives and topics. My delegation shares the opinion that the four themes of the conference are interdependent and of equal importance, and that they deserve to receive equal, priority treatment in the preparatory process.

Finally, I welcome the establishment on 4 December 2003, under the chairmanship of Canada and the Netherlands, of the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes region and express my support for the Secretary-General's recommendation to provide additional

resources for the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region.

Sir Emyr Jones Parry (United Kingdom): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Kalomoh for his presentation. I associate myself with the remarks to be made later by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union and, especially, express the condolences of the British Government to the Government of Kenya, to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and especially to the family of the Kenyan military observer killed in Ituri on 12 February.

Last year's Great Lakes mission was a valuable initiative at a critical moment: critical for the peace process in Burundi and especially for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for the future of the region. It is right that we should put the situation in a regional context. The efforts of the transitional national Government and the Governments of Rwanda and Uganda to improve relations are indeed very welcome.

Turning to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I congratulate MONUC on its work. It is striking that the attack last week took place during a MONUC mission to stop harassment of the civilian population. All the parties in Ituri must put an immediate end to such violence. I rally readily to the argument put forward by Ambassador de La Sablière that there is a strong case for MONUC to take a more robust posture with the militia in Ituri. The failure to do that at the beginning of conflict always pays us badly at the end.

The transition process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo — in particular, election preparations, security sector reform and the political and economic reunification of the country — poses huge challenges. For that, we need a transitional national Government-owned strategy and a real national Government — one which then coordinates fully with the donors. The United Kingdom will continue to step up its engagement on the Democratic Republic of the Congo as long as the transition remains on track.

The Security Council can support the process by keeping the situation under regular review and commenting, including publicly, as necessary. The International Committee in Support of the Transition is an important tool on the ground to help identify concerns and urge solutions.

We also need to continue to tackle the violence in the east. The arms embargo imposed by resolution 1493 (2003) cannot put a perfect seal on the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. How could it, given the length of the border? But it can have a real deterrent effect and make clear that we are serious. We hope, therefore, that we can reach early agreement on an arms monitoring mechanism.

Turning to Burundi, the African Mission is doing a very good job under difficult conditions and serious financial constraints. The African Union, South Africa, Mozambique and Ethiopia are to be congratulated on their significant contribution to supporting the peace process in Burundi. The United Kingdom has made, is making and will continue to make substantial sums available, especially to the African Mission in Burundi. We are also open to the idea that this force might in due course be replaced by a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Burundi.

We look forward to the report of the Secretariat mission that is due to travel to the region this week — one of the three United Nations missions currently, or soon to be, in the country.

Lastly, turning to impunity, we remain concerned about the continuing and recent human rights abuses in Burundi. In this context, we welcome and strongly support the projects developed by the Burundi Field Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Progress towards establishing a truth and reconciliation commission has been too slow. We hope that the disagreement between political groups, which so far has held up parliamentary adoption of the law on truth and reconciliation, will soon be overcome, and the law adopted.

In our view, it is important that the question of impunity and post-conflict justice be addressed at an early stage. That is necessary if there is to be lasting peace in Burundi based on democratic principles fostering truth and reconciliation and, at the same time, achieving justice.

I have a lot more to say, but as others have made similar points and as you, Mr. President, have imposed a five-minute time limit, I will willingly stop.

Mr. Konuzin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Central Africa remains one of the crisis-

ridden subregions of the African continent and requires the ongoing attention of the Security Council. We have studied in detail the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Security Council mission to Central Africa (S/2004/52), and on the whole we agree with the assessments and conclusions it contains.

With regard to specific situations in the subregion, we would like to highlight a number of issues. The overall situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains generally stable. The process of resolving the crisis in that country is gaining ground. Some positive trends are emerging in the areas of achieving national reconciliation, extending State authority to the entire territory of the country and preparing for the general elections to be held in 2005 — although all of these processes are encountering significant difficulties. Steps to create the first integrated army brigade in Kisangani effectively marked the beginning of the formation of a unified armed force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Thanks to active international intervention, there has been an obvious improvement in the security situation in the eastern part of the country. Steps are being taken to end impunity for war crimes, although much remains to be done. It is important that all parties participating in the peace process remain fully committed to their obligations and that the forces that are resisting the peace process be prevented from continuing their activities. Additional efforts are required to disarm and repatriate foreign combatants.

Some progress has been made in the resolution of the situation in Burundi. State structures for the transitional period are functioning and contacts are continuing with the forces that have not yet laid down their weapons. An end to violence must be achieved in the provinces. The progress achieved in the repatriation of Burundi combatants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo should be further developed. The African Mission in Burundi deserves our appreciation. We hope that the transitional period will end, on time, with the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections.

The situation in Central Africa has been positively influenced by the overall improvement in the regional situation. We take note of the trend towards normalization in relations among Kinshasa, Kigali, Kampala and Bujumbura, which signed, in September 2003, a declaration of principles on good-neighbourly relations and cooperation. All of these developments encourage the creation of a context that is more conducive to efforts by the interested parties to prepare the way for an international conference on peace, security, confidence-building measures and economic development in the Great Lakes region.

Given the effective role played by United Nations structures in establishing good-neighbourly relations and settling crises in Central African countries, we express support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mr. Swing, his Representative for Burundi, Mr. Dinka, and his Special Representative for the Great Lakes region, Mr. Fall.

Mr. Negroponte (United States of America): We, too, welcome the report of the Secretary-General (S/2004/52) and its introduction by Assistant Secretary-General Kalomoh.

We appreciate the particular insights offered by participants in Security Council missions. We believe that these missions provide an opportunity to learn the situation on the ground and that they are an invaluable means of informing Council deliberations. It has been almost nine months since the Council mission under discussion took place. Much of what has transpired — thanks to the efforts of the United Nations and the peoples and Governments of the region — has been positive. Nonetheless, the peoples of Central Africa continue to endure significant suffering.

In general, my delegation endorses the conclusions of the Secretary-General's report. We would wish to highlight certain points. With regard to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, my delegation was deeply saddened by the death last week of a Kenyan member of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). He lost his life in a violent attack, while carrying out his duties on behalf of peace and justice, in Ituri. His family and his country have our condolences.

Despite continued insecurity in parts of the Central African region, there is cause for hope. Since the mission travelled to the Congo, a transitional Government and its administrative arrangements have been established. The Security Council adopted resolution 1493 (2003), which gave MONUC a more robust mandate and authorized the expanded force level required to carry it out.

The Council remains united in its determination to stop the flow of illicit arms into the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Member States should be reminded of their obligation under resolution 1493 (2003) to halt the supply of arms to factions in the Congo from their territories or by their nationals. The adoption of resolution 1493 (2003) also allows the United Nations to build on the impressive work carried out by the French-led European Union intervention. Operation Artemis successfully addressed the serious violence then occurring in Bunia.

Last week, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ambassador William Lacy Swing, focused our attention on the many tasks that remain to be completed by the 2005 election date set by the Congolese themselves as the end of the transition. These tasks include a commitment to continued improvement in the relations between Governments of the region.

We thank the Secretary-General and his Representative for their efforts to create better relations among Central African nations, and in that connection we look to the Great Lakes conference now scheduled for November 2004 as a forum to solidify and endorse improvements in regional relations. We would ask fellow Member States not to wait for the conference to establish stronger ties with their neighbours, but to arrive at the conference with those stronger ties already cemented as an achievement. The Secretary-General's report refers to increased resource requirements related to the preparations for the Great Lakes conference. We hope that the friends of the conference will direct sufficient resources to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Mr. Fall, to prepare for, and carry out, that important meeting.

Recent months have seen a trend in Burundi towards greater peace and stability. Burundi's people have experienced violence and insecurity for too long. The success of the peace process is critical to pave the way for a normal democratic process and much-needed economic development. We welcome the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces nationales pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD) joining the ceasefire and the Government and urging the remaining rebel group, the Forces nationales de libération (FNL) also to join the ceasefire.

We agree with the Secretary-General's report that the African Mission in Burundi has been doing outstanding work in Burundi, despite the serious challenges it faces. The work of the African Mission in Burundi is indispensable to the success of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and to the overall peace process. We applaud the efforts of the troop-contributing countries — Ethiopia, Mozambique and South Africa — and we would highlight in particular the invaluable role of South Africa in furthering Burundi's peace process and its leadership during the November summit of the Great Lakes Regional Initiative on Burundi.

We would also recognize the contributions made to the African Mission in Burundi on a bilateral basis by the United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands and Germany, in addition to that of my own country, as well as the more recent generous European Union contribution. However, the African Mission in Burundi continues to face a funding shortfall. We are looking for additional funds to support that Mission, and we urge others to provide financial support as soon as they can. Burundi has been an excellent example of an African solution to an African problem and of the African Union's contribution to peace and stability on the continent. The international community should therefore do everything possible to support the Mission's efforts.

My delegation looks forward to continued engagement by the Council on the problems of Central Africa, and to cooperation between the Council and States of the region.

Mr. Motoc (Romania) *(spoke in French)*: I too would like to thank the Secretary-General for his detailed report (S/2004/52). My thanks go also to the Council presidency for having convened this meeting to discuss the Security Council mission to Central Africa, which is an excellent opportunity to assess the implementation of its recommendations. Mr. Kalomoh, as usual, gave us an outstanding introduction to the report. I would like to pay special tribute to the enlightened leadership of Ambassador de La Sablière as head of mission.

Romania associates itself fully with the statement to be made by the Irish presidency of the European Union. I take this opportunity to say that we very much

appreciate the efforts made by the European Union for the stabilization and development of Central Africa.

We take note of the overall progress in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which could signal a new favourable context for peace and stability throughout the region. In our view, the top priority for the success of the transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is to strengthen the capacity of the transitional Government of national unity and the extension of its authority throughout the territory, beginning with its capacity to control all of its borders. Furthermore, the Government must speed up the formulation and adoption of legislation essential for the electoral process, and must implement the process of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of Congolese combatants.

We echo the appeal made in the report of the Secretary-General for the Council to continue to support the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular concerning the elimination of arms trafficking, a condition which is essential for the stability and development of the country.

When we look at the report, we must note that it does not consider in detail the human rights situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That aspect should be addressed in greater detail in future reports.

Turning to the situation in Burundi, Romania, like other Council members, welcomes the considerably improved prospects for peace in that country. Here, we welcome the discussions that took place recently in the Netherlands between the President of Burundi and a delegation of the Forces nationales de libération (FNL). We very much encourage the parties to continue their discussions in order to achieve concrete results and to consolidate the peace process.

Without doubt, there is now a real chance for a return to normalcy in that country. But the Burundians themselves, as well as the international community, need to take advantage of the favourable context. Much remains to be done, since the peace process will soon enter the crucial phase of elections. The parties must make sure that the ceasefire is fully implemented. We also hope that political progress will lead to improved living conditions for the people and an improvement in the humanitarian situation. Urgent and substantial support by the international community will be essential to ensure that peace in Burundi is irreversible. From that standpoint, the work done by the United Nations Office in Burundi as well as the important role played by the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) are commendable.

It would be logical to mention, at this point, the timeliness of an international conference on the Great Lakes region, given the progress made in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi. Romania unreservedly supports the organization of such a conference. We are encouraged by steps recently taken, both nationally in the countries concerned and regionally, to prepare for the conference. In this context, we welcome the convening of a preparatory meeting in Addis Ababa on 14 January, with the participation of the representatives of the subregional organizations of the Great Lakes region.

I take this opportunity to stress the need for regional coordination, which would make it possible to implement political and economic confidence-building measures that are vital to the development of the entire Great Lakes region. The strengthening of a climate of trust and the capacities of the countries of the region to develop regional cooperation projects is an important condition for guaranteeing concrete results and the success of the international conference on the Great Lakes region.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): I would like to join other delegations in thanking Mr. Kalomoh for his introduction of the report of the Secretary-General. We would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this important meeting, because we welcome this opportunity for an in-depth discussion of the situation in the Central African subregion. The current political climate in Central Africa offers the region the historic opportunity to claim at last its rightful place as a major economic and political force on that continent.

In addition to the statement that Ambassador Ryan of Ireland will shortly deliver on behalf of the European Union presidency, which we fully endorse, allow me to highlight four short points that we believe to be of major importance in this context.

First, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is making great strides towards political stability. During President Kabila's visit to Berlin on 6 February, the German Government acknowledged the efforts of the transitional national Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and underlined its willingness to continue to support the peace process there

bilaterally as well as within the frameworks of the European Union, the United Nations and the international financial institutions.

Still, there are many obstacles that must be overcome before sustainable peace is achieved in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Security in the eastern Congo has improved following the success of Operation Artemis and the subsequent increase of the strength and capabilities of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Let me say that we are deeply saddened by the death of a Kenyan military observer in Ituri. We express our condolences to the Kenyan Government and we hope that those responsible for the crime will be brought to justice swiftly.

One decisive element of peacekeeping in eastern Congo is the weapons embargo for North and South Kivu and Ituri, set forth in Security Council resolution 1493 (2003). The arms embargo must be strengthened in order for it to have a deterrent effect. We hope that the Security Council will soon be in a position to reach a decision on this matter.

With regard to the security sector throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the high-level meeting in New York a week ago developed a common understanding on the way forward and identified the most urgent tasks for the transitional national Government in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the international donor community to ensure that the transition stays on track and that elections can be held on schedule.

Secondly, the peace process in Burundi seems to be on the right course with the opening of a dialogue between the Burundian Government and the Palipehutu-Forces nationales de libération. The Security Council has welcomed this development and is looking forward to its next stage. In due course, the Council will have to decide on the question of an enlarged United Nations role in the Burundian peace process.

The African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) has contributed tremendously to the stabilization of that country. Germany has supported AMIB bilaterally, in addition to its share of the European Union's €25 million for the Mission. We commend the role AMIB has played in stabilizing the country. South African Vice-President Zuma reminded the Council, at the open meeting in December, that one of the objectives of the African Mission in Burundi was to help create conditions that are favourable for the establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation. My Government believes that the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Burundi must now be given serious consideration.

Thirdly, from a regional perspective, efforts to normalize relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighbouring States are being stepped up with the declaration of principles of good-neighbourly relations and cooperation of September 2003, subsequent high-level visits between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and agreements on the reopening of embassies. Such confidence-building measures are indispensable building blocks for the Great Lakes region conference.

This brings me to my fourth point. The initiative for a Great Lakes region conference under the auspices of the United Nations and the African Union is finally taking shape. In this context, let me say that we are not at all discouraged by the recent adjustment to the conference's timetable. On the contrary, we are pleased with the decision to shift the first summit to a date that allows for careful and thorough preparation of the substance, format and structure of that important process.

Despite these encouraging developments, the process of the political and economic stabilization of the Central African subregion remains vulnerable and is not yet irreversible. Many of the problems afflicting the region can be dealt with effectively only at the regional level. The disarmament, demobilization and successful reintegration of former combatants into regular armies or civilian life is a cross-cutting issue, as are the illegal exploitation of natural resources and the illegal flow of arms to belligerents.

All of these challenges can be met only through joint efforts by the countries in the region and the international community as a whole. Strong regional involvement will remain a decisive factor. That means strengthening existing subregional mechanisms, supporting promising developments within the African Union, and further coordination between mechanisms as well as cooperation with the United Nations, the international financial institutions and other stakeholders.

Cooperation among mechanisms and organizations also requires the identification of

respective strengths and areas of responsibility. Further cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, in particular, in our view, will be of benefit.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

I, too, wish to thank Mr. Kalomoh for introducing the progress report of the Secretary-General on the recommendations of the Security Council mission to Central Africa. We are pleased to note that, since the Council mission's visit to Central Africa last June, the overall situation in that region has witnessed encouraging changes. The transitional Government and the legislative bodies of the Democratic Republic of the Congo are functioning well. The security environment in the East has been enhanced. Relations between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours have improved to varying degrees.

The peace process in Burundi continues to make progress. The Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces nationales pour la défense de la démocratie have entered the peace process. The leaders of Palipehutu-Forces nationales de libération met with the President of Burundi last month. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in Burundi has been fully launched.

Events have demonstrated that the Council mission's visit and recommendations are useful in advancing the situation in Central Africa, including in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. Naturally, the peace processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi still face many uncertainties. Both countries have much to do in the areas of security sector reform, the rule of law and preparations for general elections. National reconciliation awaits further consolidation. The economies of both countries are extremely precarious due to the effects of the long war. The proper handling of the issues in those areas is of vital importance to achieving sustainable peace in both countries.

The international community should continue to follow the situation in both countries and encourage all parties to keep the peace, while adopting a comprehensive and integrated strategy to facilitate national reconciliation there and to help them achieve economic reconstruction.

We appreciate the outstanding role played by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in the peace process in that country, and we shall continue actively to support its work. We also support the United Nations in providing effective assistance to facilitate the settlement of the Burundi issue, and we urge the Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu-Forces nationales de libération (Palipehutu-FNL) to enter the Burundi peace process expeditiously.

We think that, under the current circumstances, the convening of an international conference on the Great Lakes region is of great significance for further enhancement of the peace processes in both countries, for friendly relations among all countries of the region and for lasting peace, stability and development in Central Africa. We look forward to the holding of the conference as scheduled and to its positive outcome. We endorse the Secretariat's recommendations on increased resources for the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Burundi. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nkingiye (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): It is a real pleasure for me to see you, Sir, presiding over the Security Council during the month of February. China, which you represent, is indeed a sincere friend to Burundi and to all of Africa. The brief time you have spent in the presidency suffices to confirm your unfailing devotion to the cause of the United Nations. Your outstanding performance is a source of pride for your country and for us. I should also like to pay a well-deserved tribute to your predecessor for the excellent work accomplished last month. In addition, I want to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Kalomoh for his excellent introduction of the progress report of the Secretary-General (S/2004/52).

Thanks to the efforts of the States and the peoples of Central Africa, supported by the international community, the destructive wars and the tensions among neighbours that have characterized the past 10 years are beginning to fade. In their place, normalization processes are making undeniable progress, giving fresh hope to populations that have

endured unspeakable violence and suffering, including genocide.

As pointed out by the Secretary-General's report, peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi, although still fragile, is no longer an unattainable objective. Since the last Security Council mission, in June 2003, new institutions have been established in both countries. They are guiding the transition — with some difficulties, to be sure, but also, and above all, with an unfailing determination to stop the war, to reconcile the populations, to build democracy and respect for human rights, to rebuild the nation and, finally, to rebuild regional solidarity on new foundations of trust, mutual respect and complementarity.

Here, I should like to elaborate on the steps taken by my country, Burundi, and on the challenges still to be met. During its visit in early June 2003, the Security Council resolved to continue its political support for the process of negotiation with the armed groups, to mobilize donors and to contribute to the fight against impunity.

On the first point, much progress has been made, since the principal rebel movement — the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces nationales pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD) — has signed with the Government a ceasefire agreement now respected by both parties and has joined the transitional institutions. Therefore, all that remains is to canton its combatants and to begin disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and repatriation (DDRR) operations. Their cantonment, together with the formation of a joint protection unit for the institutions, should begin this very week.

The other movements are also in the process of gathering their combatants, most of whom are returning to the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the support of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). Only the Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu-Forces nationales de libération (Palipehutu-FNL) movement remains outside the peace process. But there has been real hope of bringing it to the negotiating table since the meeting held from 18 to 21 January 2004 in the Netherlands between the President of the Republic and a delegation from that movement. Pressure by the international community on Mr. Agathon Rwasa, leader of the movement, is still urgently needed so that the process can be totally inclusive and can make steady progress.

Concerning support for the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB), it is important first of all to stress that it has done remarkable work since its deployment — work carried out under very difficult conditions related to the lack of logistical and financial resources, a situation that still persists. AMIB had been deployed initially to protect leaders returning from exile, to monitor the ceasefire, to assist in the first demobilization and disarmament activities and thus to create an environment conducive to the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping mission.

Members will recall that the South African Deputy President, a mediator in the Burundi conflict, came before the Security Council on 4 December 2003 to advocate the dispatch of a United Nations peacekeeping mission, given the progress made in the peace process in my country. The time has come to meet that request; the Government of Burundi very much insists on this. We are not asking for the impossible; we ask only for what the Council provides to other countries in similar and sometimes even more complicated situations.

The sending to Burundi of a fact-finding mission by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations last weekend, in accordance with the Security Council presidential statement dated 22 December 2003 (S/PRST/2003/30), is a first step in the right direction. The Government is sincerely grateful to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the members of the Council for that decision, and we trust that it will soon lead to the deployment of a true peacekeeping mission. If such a mission does not arrive in the coming weeks, the situation could swiftly deteriorate, both politically and in terms of security. Important reforms such as those of the security services and of the judiciary would be jeopardized, as would the demobilization and disarmament operation.

On the ground today, armed rebel movements — even those in the Government — are moving about in the country. They constitute a parallel administration and police force, holding the population hostage and intimidating supporters of different political movements. One spark could re-ignite the fire at any time in a country where civilian populations also bear weapons. Pre-electoral fever will undoubtedly accompany the debate on drafting an electoral code, a

body of common law and a post-transition constitution, which will begin soon and will be followed by local, legislative, senatorial and presidential elections before 1 November 2004.

As one can see, such a heavy programme for a country still traumatized by war and by hateful violence of every sort requires an international presence that can reassure the population and the national and international actors. We need such a mission to truly monitor ceasefire compliance, to conduct the DDRR operation with the well-known expertise of the United Nations, to cleanse the atmosphere for the work of the two Commissions on judicial inquiry and reconciliation provided for by the Arusha Peace Agreement, to facilitate the access of humanitarian workers to disaster victims, to allow for the return of refugees and internally displaced persons and to chart the course towards the holding of peaceful, free and transparent elections.

Clearly, the arrival of a United Nations peacekeeping mission provided with an adequate mandate, is considered urgent and vital to the success of the Burundi peace process. Furthermore, such a mission in Burundi will help, in cooperation with MONUC, to stabilize the Great Lakes region, ensuring that the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi and the Lusaka and Sun City accords for the Democratic Republic of the Congo will eliminate once and for all the tension at the borders caused by the transborder movement of rebels, refugees and members of the former Forces armées rwandaises and Interahamwe militia. My delegation would have preferred the report of the Secretary-General to mention the request made by Deputy President Zuma on behalf of the regional initiative.

I shall not dwell on the paramount importance of the fight against impunity; my delegation discussed that point enough in the debate on "Post-conflict national reconciliation: role of the United Nations" (see S/PV.4903). It will suffice for me to recall that the international judicial commission of inquiry is a pillar of the peace and reconciliation process and that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission alone will not be sufficient unless it is based on a minimum of justice, on individual and sincere repentance and on the psychological and physical rehabilitation of the victims. Here again, we ask that the United Nations support Burundi, as it has done in other situations of the same kind.

We are pleased that the Council has already asked the Secretary-General to dispatch a fact-finding mission to Burundi with a view to establishing the international judicial commission of inquiry; we hope that such a mission will be deployed as soon as possible. In that way, we will be able to build on a solid foundation, the possibility for reconciliation will be genuine and the resources promised in Brussels on 13 and 14 January for the reconstruction of Burundi will indeed serve that purpose.

The Government of Burundi, through the President of the Republic, pledged in Brussels to lead the process to a successful conclusion, and in partnership with the donors to manage in full transparency the assistance pledged in support of the process. Of course, the amounts promised must indeed be disbursed, and efforts must be made to alleviate the debt burden.

We sincerely thank the United Nations for having mobilized the international community to help Burundi. We are delighted at the role played by the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi, and we welcome the cooperation between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council in helping African countries emerging from conflict.

With regard to the international conference on the Great Lakes region, Burundi supports the preparatory process that is under way and hopes that it will be completed as soon as possible. We believe that this international conference will undoubtedly help us attain the desired objectives: stabilization, cooperation and peaceful coexistence among the signatories of the declaration of principles on good-neighbourly relations and cooperation, signed on 25 September 2003, in New York, under the auspices of Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

We ask the friends of the Great Lakes region of Africa to generously provide the resources needed by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to start the preparatory work for the conference, so that it can be a success for everyone.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Burundi for his kind words addressed to me and to the country I represent.

Mr. Konuzin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the very beginning of the transitional

period in Burundi, a law was adopted providing temporary immunity for political crimes. I would like to ask the representative of Burundi for what kind of crimes immunity is granted. Is it the intention to return to a consideration of these crimes at a later stage? I ask this because the Burundian experience could be useful in other country's situations.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I give the floor to the representative of Burundi.

Mr. Nkingiye (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): Indeed, in the context of the political resolution of the peace process in Burundi, a decision was taken and a law was adopted to provide political amnesty to some leaders. This decision was political only in scope: the law clearly states that crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity are not within its ambit. It also says that the text remains open, and that national courts — and international courts, once they are established — must have every prerogative to conduct investigations into any suspicious cases, and that any immunity should be withdrawn when necessary. In other words, this is not a law that provides de facto amnesty to those who have committed horrendous crimes in Burundi.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Thank you, Sir, for having convened this meeting. We would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We would also like to congratulate the representative of Chile on the way in which he conducted the presidency last month.

My delegation welcomes the work of the Security Council mission to Central Africa, in which we participated. The mission's report was clear proof of the importance of such Security Council missions. These missions truly play an important role, particularly when they are followed by real efforts to implement their recommendations.

We welcome the implementation of many of the recommendations of the mission that visited Central Africa from 7 to 16 June 2003, in particular those related to the establishment, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, of transitional institutions in a number of crucial and sensitive areas. We welcome the appointment of members of the transitional Government representing the eight components and entities of the inter-Congolese dialogue. We also welcome the adoption by the Council of Ministers of a set of important policy goals, in particular the formation of a national army and a national police force. The Council of Ministers also adopted a series of draft decrees on reorganizing the Government and the various ministries.

The Special Representatives of the Secretary-General have made commendable efforts, in particular in rehabilitating the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in reforming the security sector. While we congratulate them on their efforts, we would like to recall that the road ahead is long, particularly when it comes to reforming the security sector and extending the authority of the Government throughout the country. There must be an end to impunity; here, of course, the rule of law needs to be strengthened. To achieve this, the transitional Government must play its role, particularly in strengthening the rule of law and creating institutions and entities that can reinforce that principle.

We all know that the regional dimension of conflicts in Africa is of crucial importance. Meetings in which heads of State of the region participated have made it possible to ease tensions in the region and strengthen understanding among neighbouring countries. We believe that such efforts should be continued in order to strengthen good-neighbourliness and to implement such agreements as the declaration signed by heads of State or Government in New York.

My delegation believes that special attention should be paid to disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and resettlement or repatriation (DDRRR) programmes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, since these will have an important impact on peace in the region. That country should also make every effort to put an end to the illegal exploitation of its natural resources.

It is important that the work of the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB), in which South Africa and other countries participate, be completed. We agree with the Secretary-General that AMIB faces difficulties that possibly could jeopardize its significant contribution to the peace process. We also support the Secretary-General's appeal to the donor community to generously provide funds to the mission.

The Government of Burundi has taken some positive steps to carry out the DDR programme. United Nations agencies in Bujumbura have also supported the efforts of the African Mission in Burundi and of the transitional Government. Top priority should be given to disarming child soldiers. During the Council mission's visit to Bujumbura, President Ndayizeye said that his country sorely needed financial support to cover all areas. Funds promised by donors at the conferences in Paris and Geneva must be disbursed in order to tackle the priority matter of establishing programmes and projects to restore peace in Burundi. We also support the appeal of the Secretary-General to bring about reconciliation between the transitional Government of Burundi and the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces nationales pour la défense de la démocratie.

My delegation believes that the international conference on the Great Lakes region will be a unique, historic opportunity that will make it possible to bring about peace and end the conflict in the region and to achieve the subregion's integration. We believe that the efforts of Mr. Ibrahima Fall in this connection deserve all support and appreciation. At the end of his report, the Secretary-General made a number of observations that the Security Council and the relevant parties should take into consideration.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Ireland. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to maker her statement.

Ms. Murnaghan (Ireland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia; the candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro; and the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Norway, align themselves with this statement.

On behalf of the European Union, Mr. President, I would like to thank you and the Security Council for scheduling this meeting today, which is an opportunity for the international community to demonstrate our commitment to the Central African region. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his progress report on the recommendations of the Security Council mission to Central Africa last year (S/2004/52). I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Kalomoh for his briefing this morning.

Although Central Africa has the potential to be one of the richest subregions in Africa, its potential has not been realized. Many of the subregion's countries are either in conflict or in post-conflict situations, and the subregion as a whole continues to suffer from the proliferation of small arms and armed groups, high unemployment among young people, an underdeveloped infrastructure, great numbers of displaced persons and refugees, poor human rights records and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Those are significant challenges that demand our attention. The European Union is convinced that tackling those shared problems also demands that we develop a regional approach which is in concert with our efforts in each of the individual countries concerned.

In considering a regional approach — and in particular the convening of the international conference for the Great Lakes region — it is encouraging to note that the Secretary-General has said that the prospects for success in the region have improved significantly, most notably in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The European Union believes that the success of the Great Lakes conference will depend primarily on the common political will of the countries involved in achieving shared objectives. In that regard, we welcome the important progress made in the preparatory process to date, including the outcomes of the most recent meeting in Addis Ababa.

The European Union suggests that the conference will be all the more successful if an agreed time frame for clear and realistic goals based on concrete operational agreements or projects can be defined early on. In that regard, it is now important that all the national preparatory committees take immediate steps to enable the agreed timetable for the holding of the conference to proceed on schedule.

The EU welcomes the Secretary-General's call for the first regional meeting of national preparatory committees to be convened as soon as possible. As the Secretary-General notes in his report, it is during that first regional preparatory meeting that detailed

discussions on substance and priority programmes expected from the international conference will be initiated at the regional level. In addition, coordination and consistency with other existing processes such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development are also important.

As preparations continue throughout the year towards the first summit of the conference, the European Union stands ready to engage as a committed and supportive partner to the countries of the region, as a member of the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes region, through the good offices of the EU Special Representative for the Great Lakes, Mr. Aldo Ajello, and by our efforts to strengthen more effective subregional cooperation and integration through mechanisms such as those set up by the Economic Community of Central African States.

As I mentioned previously, the prospects for the international conference on the Great Lakes region are much improved due to the progress made in the peace processes in the region.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the European Union is encouraged by the significant improvements achieved. Those include, inter alia, the improved security situation, signs of national reunification such as increased transport links and improving commerce, better relations between that country and its neighbours, and progress in security sector reform. The EU commends the transitional Government in its implementation of the Sun City and Pretoria agreements. Difficult decisions have been taken, and the commitment of the parties is encouraging. Nevertheless, the situation remains fragile, and the European Union urges President Kabila and his Government to continue their work and put in place the legislative framework and establish the national institutions required for the holding of free and transparent elections at all levels, the formation of restructured and integrated military and police forces and the implementation of a national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme.

The European Union is committed to underpinning peace, security and democracy in Democratic Republic of the Congo. Operation Artemis and the EU's support for the Integrated Police Unit are clear demonstrations of that commitment. The EU stands ready to support concrete initiatives for the rebuilding of a stable Congolese State able to guarantee the safety of the Congolese people, national reconciliation and stability in the region. In that regard, the European Union commends the Secretary-General for his initiative last week in calling a high-level meeting to consider a strategy for the international community's support of the security sector reform effort.

The European Union is greatly encouraged by recent progress in Burundi. Since we last had the opportunity in the Council Chamber to discuss the state of the peace process there, a significant milestone has been reached with the convening of talks between President Ndayizeye and a delegation from the Forces nationales de libération (FNL). The European Union is pleased that those talks took place in a constructive and cordial atmosphere. We also welcome the parties' recognition of the need to end violence in Burundi and their willingness to continue the dialogue.

The European Union hopes the proposed follow-up meeting between President Ndayizeye and the FNL takes place at the earliest opportunity. The EU calls for the cessation of all hostilities in Burundi and for the conclusion of an agreement for the inclusion of the FNL in Burundian State institutions. The EU remains willing to assist the parties in their quest for a peaceful solution, and we reconfirm our readiness to support Burundi in its reconstruction efforts, which remain severely hampered by the ongoing violence in the absence of an all-inclusive peace agreement.

The European Union is committed to working closely with our African partners to strengthen African capacities in the area of conflict resolution and peacekeeping. In this regard, the European Union commends the African Union for establishing the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) — the first force of its kind in the history of the African Union. The European Union fully supports this initiative and is contributing €25 million to AMIB. In addition, a number of EU member States have also made significant national contributions, both in advance of and in response to the Secretary-General's recent appeal for support.

Notwithstanding the success and importance of AMIB, the European Union believes, as stated last November in this Chamber, that the option of a United Nations operation in Burundi, authorized by the Council, will have to be considered in due course. In this regard, the EU welcomes the fact that the

Secretary-General is sending an assessment mission to Burundi later this month, and we look forward to its reporting in due course.

The wind of peace is blowing across the African continent. Africa and its people deserve our full support in their quest for peace, democracy and sustainable development. Nowhere is this more true than in Central Africa. The European Union recognizes this obligation, and Africa, the United Nations and the whole international community will find the EU to be a willing and eager partner for peace and development for all the African peoples.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): It is regrettable that the situation in Central Africa and the Great Lakes region remains tense and fragile, and therefore requires the continuing involvement of the international community. It is important to recognize that conflicts in that region often involve neighbouring countries, which obliges us to seek their resolution from a regional perspective. I therefore welcome your decision, Mr. President, to convene this meeting, which will enable us to address the issues from a region-wide perspective.

At the Third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III), held last September, Japan indicated that the consolidation of peace is one of three pillars of our assistance to Africa and that great emphasis is to be placed on the promotion of human security. We consider the Great Lakes region to be a priority subregion — one in which efforts for the consolidation of peace and the promotion of human security are definitively required.

Regarding the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I would first like to express our deep sorrow over the killing in the Ituri region of one of the Kenyan military observers from the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). That occurrence demonstrates that, despite the progress in the peace process since the establishment of the transitional Government, the situation in the eastern part of the country remains insecure and precarious.

Japan fully supports the focused redeployment of MONUC troops to the eastern areas. In order to further strengthen the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it goes without saying that reform of the security sector is of vital importance. Japan thus decided last October to extend assistance in the amount of approximately $4 million for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of Congolese soldiers. We are also considering extending additional assistance in this area, in coordination with the United Nations and other donors.

I understand that the Security Council is discussing measures to enhance the arms embargo imposed in the eastern part of the territory, such as the establishment of a group of technical experts to conduct preliminary investigations and of a sanctions committee to make recommendations to the Council based on the findings of the expert group, as proposed by the Secretary-General. We would like to stress in this connection that any measures introduced by the Council must be based on a careful study of their cost-effectiveness, in order to ensure that they are both feasible and effective.

As for Burundi, Japan welcomes the meeting that took place in the Netherlands between the representatives of the Forces nationales de liberation and President Ndayizeye, and their agreement to continue their talks. We strongly hope that, although the situation is still fragile and the outcome difficult to predict, those talks will eventually lead to lasting peace in Burundi. At the same time, we are very much encouraged to note that African initiatives for conflict resolution and peace consolidation are also under way in Burundi. The efforts of South Africa and Tanzania to facilitate and mediate a peace agreement, the summit-level initiative of the Great Lakes region, and the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) — the first peacekeeping operation of the African Union (AU) — all represent the crystallization of the main principle underlying the New Partnership for Africa's Development and TICAD — that is, African ownership — and we greatly appreciate those efforts.

We welcome the entry into force of the Protocol on the Peace and Security Council of the AU, which will enable African countries to deal with conflict in the region more effectively. Japan is convinced that conflicts in Africa can be more effectively addressed by African countries themselves, as they naturally have greater knowledge and cultural sensitivity, as well as a

strong sense of ownership, with regard to conflict in the region. Also, Japan believes that the success of such AU activities, including AMIB, will be of decisive importance for conflict resolution in Africa in the future. Japan appreciates the contribution of South Africa, Ethiopia and Mozambique in this connection and strongly hopes that, given sufficient international support, the activities of AMIB will continue to be conducted effectively.

As a member of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi established by the Economic and Social Council, I had the valuable experience of participating in the international effort to conduct a needs assessment exercise in the areas of humanitarian and economic assistance, as well as in the formulation of advice on the coordination and effective implementation of such assistance. I found that Burundi needs international assistance in a number of areas. In order to promote the post-conflict peace process in Burundi, Japan intends to support that country, in coordination with other countries, the United Nations and the international organizations concerned. More concretely, we will consider extending appropriate assistance for improving human security for the people, promoting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and implementing elections in accordance with specific requests by the Government of Burundi and international organizations, once relevant national programmes have been finalized.

I am aware that a United Nations reconnaissance mission is now on the ground to assist in the effort to consolidate the peace in Burundi. Japan intends to send a concurrent mission to Bujumbura next week to have discussions with our partners on future cooperation between our two countries. To date, the Security Council has assessed the situation among its 15 members only and made important decisions without consulting the major non-member financially contributing countries — although the Council certainly expects to share the financial burden of its decisions with the non-members.

Japan therefore welcomes the fact that on this occasion the Secretariat is providing major donors and contributors with the opportunity to send concurrent missions to conduct assessments alongside the United Nations mission. We hope that this will become a precedent for the future. We would also like to see Burundi, in the process of its transition from the post-conflict stage to reconstruction and development, become a model for the promotion of human security in Africa.

As a member of the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region, Japan finds it regrettable that the international conference has been postponed until the end of this year. Naturally, we are hoping that the conference will be a success, but at the same time we are concerned about the overly broad themes and agenda. We would like to emphasize that the focus of the conference should be the consolidation of peace.

In order to consolidate peace, it is essential to demonstrate the dividends of peace to the people in the local community and to advance the peace process, humanitarian and reconstruction assistance and security in a comprehensive and integrated manner. Relying on this conviction, we remain strongly committed to the consolidation of peace in the region.

The President *(spoke in Chinese)*: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) *(spoke in Arabic)*: The report of the Secretary-General on the progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations of the Security Council mission to Central Africa (S/2004/52) reflects something that my delegation would like to emphasize today before the Security Council, namely, that despite the signs of positive developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi, there are still challenges to the restoration of peace in its full sense to those two countries. Conditions in the Great Lakes region in general are still extremely serious, and we must exert more effort to confront them. In this context, my delegation would like to make the following remarks.

First, it is important to recognize that the post-conflict phase in Central Africa requires partnerships between the transitional Government, the United Nations, the concerned regional and international parties, the African Union, subregional organizations and the community of international donors. Those partnerships must be based on the principle of integrated and balanced responsibilities among the partners.

We now have a clearer understanding of the needs and requirements of the different phases of

peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building in the region. Those requirements go beyond the very limited concept of peace to a much broader list of inter-related and overlapping political, humanitarian, economic and social elements. Such elements require an integrated package of assistance, incentives and obligations, which could be difficult to turn into practical measures if the required partnerships are not achieved.

Secondly, because addressing those elements in one State acquires specific importance based on the nature, specificity and aspects of that State's ongoing conflict, we urgently need a more comprehensive regional vision of the broad-based issues which extend beyond the national borders of any individual country and impact regional stability and peace. Such issues include, in particular, the status of refugees, repatriation of ex-combatants to their original countries and social and economic development.

We therefore look forward to the continuation of the current preparatory process for an international conference on peace, security and democracy in the Great Lakes region, under the joint auspices of the United Nations and the African Union. The idea of holding the conference is a practical translation of the concept of partnership to which we aspire, as well as a manifestation of the comprehensive vision of the organic link between the concepts of security, on the one hand, and development, on the other hand, including its political, economic and social elements.

In that context, my delegation would like to express its appreciation for the invitation extended by the seven core countries to Egypt to participate in the conference as an observer, a matter which reflects the strong natural and strategic links between the peoples of the Nile Valley and those of the Great Lakes. Here I note that we aspire to contribute to that process by providing the necessary political and technical guidance to make the conference successful and to reach its goals and objectives.

Thirdly, the Central African region, and particularly Burundi, is witnessing the beginnings of the evolution of the role of the African Union in peacekeeping efforts in the continent. We would like today to note our appreciation of the African States that are participating in the first peacekeeping mission that the African Union has successfully implemented, in Burundi, despite the well-known financial and logistical difficulties that the mission faces. Here, we call for the United Nations and the community of international donors to provide all forms of political, technical and financial assistance to the African Union in Burundi, as an emerging model reflecting the desire of Africans to undertake an ever-growing role in peacekeeping and to gradually fulfil their participation in the international partnership to bring peace and security to Africa.

Fourthly and finally, the relative progress achieved in the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is an indicator of what can be achieved by a partnership between the United Nations and the national, regional and international powers during one of the most difficult and intractable crises, provided that the parties have the necessary political will.

One of the most significant challenges facing the partners in the forthcoming stage is how to deal with the continuing illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and how to channel the revenues from its natural resources towards efforts to bring peace and reconstruction, instead of using those resources to destabilize the eastern and northeastern areas of country. Those resources must serve, as well, in the rehabilitation and reform of the security sector as preparation to gradually extend the authority of the transitional Government to all parts of the country.

In that context, we look forward to the Security Council taking specific steps to deal with the link between the illegal exploitation of natural resources and the flow of arms to the forces and factions which resist and obstruct efforts to bring about peace and reconstruction in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We look forward to the transitional Government and the international donors being committed to their agreements concerning the measures and steps necessary to reform the national security sector. We believe that the members of this Council should recognize that the huge efforts already invested in the restoration of stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo deserve all ways and means possible to overcome the challenges that still threaten that country which is considered a cornerstone of stability in the Central Africa region as a whole.

Finally, I would like to express to you, Sir, our deepest thanks for organizing this meeting.

The President *(spoke in Chinese)*: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Rwanda. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kamanzi (Rwanda): This being the first time my delegation has taken the floor in the Security Council in the month of February, I would like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council.

I would also like to thank you, Sir, for calling a meeting to discuss the progress report of the Secretary-General on the recommendations of the Security Council mission to Central Africa (S/2004/52). Further, I thank the members of the Security Council for their continued interest in and concern for the Central African subregion.

Last week a Kenyan military observer serving in the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), Major Peter Wachai, was killed while on duty in a village near Bunia in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. My Government joins others in expressing its condolences to the Government and the people of Kenya on that loss, and in calling for the killers to be brought to justice.

Rwanda witnesses with much encouragement and interest the ongoing peace processes in which its neighbouring countries of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi are engaged, despite the many challenges they still face. In this regard, Rwanda wishes once more to pledge its unwavering support for these processes and is looking forward to the renaissance of the two countries as stable nations.

My Government hailed the establishment of transitional institutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo last year. We believe that this not only fulfils an important requirement of the Lusaka Agreement, but also paves the way for a genuine reconciliation process. My Government has since begun the process of normalizing relations with the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

As highlighted in the report, the Rwandan Foreign Minister visited Kinshasa last October to meet with President Kabila and other Congolese officials to express the Rwandan Government's support for the transitional Government and to express our desire that the two countries work collaboratively to restore peace and security and to promote development in the region. Prior to this, at the invitation of the Government of Rwanda, two Congolese Vice-Presidents, Mr. Arthur Zaidi Ngoma and Mr. Azarias Ruberwa, attended President Kagame's inauguration in September and the Congolese Minister for Regional Cooperation, Mr. Mbusa Nyamwisi, visited Kigali for talks in October. Rwanda believes that these meetings are the building blocks for the normalization of relations between our two countries.

With respect to the situation in Ituri, my Government is greatly concerned by the continued lawlessness and violence in the province, which result in suffering for the ordinary people. We welcome the Security Council's decision to deploy the MONUC Ituri Brigade with a Chapter VII mandate, as well as the Mission's military expansion outside Bunia.

The continued presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo of armed and dangerous former Rwandan Army (ex-FAR) and Interahamwe militia will be a threat to the security of Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the entire region until they are effectively disarmed and demobilized. In this connection, however, we welcomed the voluntary repatriation to Rwanda last year of about 100 commanders and men of ex-FAR. They were well received and resettled in their villages in a spirit of reconciliation and also with the intention of encouraging others still in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to return to Rwanda.

We are, however, concerned by reports that hundreds of other would-be returnees are being prevented from doing so by extremist elements among them. We appeal to the Security Council and to the international community as a whole urgently to address this issue. We also appeal to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to provide maximum cooperation to ensure that those who would like to return to Rwanda are able to do so and that those who choose to remain in the Democratic Republic of the Congo do not present a security threat to Rwanda.

The Government of Rwanda commends the tireless efforts of the Government of Burundi, and President Ndayizeye in particular, to restore peace and security and to reconcile the people of Burundi. We welcome the signing of the comprehensive ceasefire agreement between the Government and the Conseil

national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces nationales pour la défense de la démocratie of Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza in Dar es Salaam last November. We also welcome the recent talks in the Netherlands between the Government and members of Agathon Rwasa's branch of the Forces nationales de libération. These are encouraging developments, which should be recognized and welcomed by the international community.

In his report, the Secretary-General stresses that, despite the encouraging developments in the peace process, there is a risk that hopeful signs could be lost if there is no peace dividend in the form of improved living conditions. Rwanda agrees entirely with that assessment. We therefore call upon the international community expeditiously to make the required funds available for economic recovery and humanitarian activities in Burundi.

On the final point of the Great Lakes conference, my Government commends the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, for the preparations undertaken so far and once again reiterates its full support for the process. Preparations for the conference are already under way at the national level in Rwanda. Consultations by the national coordinator and the national preparatory committee in preparation for the conference are already under way. Rwanda looks forward to the conference in the hope that it will enable us to conduct frank and productive discussions on the four main topic areas.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of Rwanda for his kind words addressed to me.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4912

Security Council

Fifty-ninth year

Provisional

4912th meeting

Wednesday, 18 February 2004, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wang Guangya	(China)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Baali
	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Benin	Mr. Zinsou
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	Chile	Mr. Muñoz
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Pakistan	Mr. Khalid
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Spain	Ms. Menéndez
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Thomson
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

04-24222 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Roed-Larsen to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General.

I now give him the floor.

Mr. Roed-Larsen: When I last briefed the Council in December, I struck a cautiously optimistic tone, citing the opening of a narrow window of opportunity for resuming the peace process. This window of opportunity — based primarily on the stated willingness of both sides to talk to each other — still remains open. In recent weeks, key Israeli and Palestinian officials have met. We hope that a first meeting between the two Prime Ministers, Mr. Qurei and Mr. Sharon, will come at the earliest opportunity.

If they do indeed meet, as we expect, we might see the preparation for bold actions we have long called for — actions that could allow us finally to move down the path to peace as envisioned in the Quartet's road map and endorsed in Security Council resolution 1515 (2003).

Already, Mr. Sharon has announced preparations for one bold step which could re-establish the requisite trust between the two parties to fulfil all their requirements under the road map. Earlier this month, he announced that he would withdraw the Israeli military and settlements from the Gaza Strip, where they control about 40 per cent of the land. No Israeli prime minister has previously had the boldness and the vision to say he will remove settlers — as long called for by the international community — and initiate a plan for its implementation. The proposed step — withdrawal from occupied territory — should be welcomed by all.

Prime Minister Qurei did so recently after meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, saying he would accept it as a first step of a broader withdrawal. Further statements of support have been made by our Quartet colleagues and other Member States engaged in the attempt to forge peace in the region. But, as the Secretary-General said after Mr. Sharon's announcement, the withdrawal from Gaza must be seen as a first step. It must be made in the context of the road map and as part of a cooperative engagement between Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the international community. We anticipate hearing more fully, and in operational terms, about Mr. Sharon's plan soon.

The announcement has set the stage for three possible scenarios in the coming months. One is the resumption of a vigorous peace process, with re-engagement between Israel and many of its Arab partners. The second is unilateral Israeli disengagement from parts of the occupied Palestinian territory, starting in Gaza, but not as part of a process or re-engagement. The third centres on the inability of the parties to enact that withdrawal, which would maintain the status quo, with all the violence and misery that goes with it. That could lead to the rapid erosion of the Palestinian Authority and, with it, growing disorder, chaos and possibly even gang rule in the occupied Palestinian territory. Such a scenario would be deeply against Palestinian and Israeli interests and could be a destabilizing element in the region.

The only viable long-term option for both parties is the first — the resumption of the peace process. If both parties engage in good faith and are guided by the international community under the auspices of the Quartet, real progress can be made. The alternatives could lead to dramatic and negative consequences.

Still, much has been made of the possible unilateral nature of this move. It is unlikely that, in

practice, an orderly withdrawal of thousands of settlers from the Gaza Strip could take place without cooperation from the Palestinian Authority and the assistance of the international community. Without such cooperation and assistance, a withdrawal could easily strengthen the most radical elements, weaken the Palestinian Authority further and lead eventually to more violence.

In that sense, the term "unilateral withdrawal" is not particularly meaningful, because such a withdrawal cannot take place in vacuum. In practice, a withdrawal must be negotiated between the two sides or through a third party. That was the case of the so-called unilateral withdrawal by Israel from southern Lebanon, which in fact was negotiated by the United Nations under the auspices of the Security Council.

Such cooperation and assistance should readily be given. As long as the removal of settlers in the Gaza Strip is a true withdrawal, it should be supported as a bold confidence-building act and a first step to the fulfilment of the United Nations calls to the Government of Israel to end its occupation, as set forth in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

This cautiously positive view of the situation is tempered by the grim reality that confronts both Palestinians and Israelis. We remain in a stalemate characterized by continued violence and lack of constructive progress on the road map, with Israeli occupation still firmly entrenched and little concrete Palestinian movement on reform.

Sadly, the Gaza withdrawal announcement occurred in the context of a recent upsurge in violence that has led to more bloodshed, loss of life and misery. Since the last briefing on 16 January, at total of 11 Israelis and 65 Palestinians, including at least eight under age, have died. At least 305 Palestinians and 58 Israelis have been injured. That brings the death toll since September 2000 to 925 Israelis and 3,165 Palestinians.

Much of the recent Israel military action has been concentrated in the Gaza Strip. Many of the Palestinian deaths came during two raids — one in January and one last week. A total of 24 Palestinians were killed during the exchange of fire in those raids. In addition, a series of Israeli military incursions in the area of Rafah next to the Egyptian border has left nearly 600 people homeless through house demolitions. In all, nearly 10,000 people have lost their homes since October 2000.

The tragic outcome of those events underscores the importance of the parties' taking immediate steps to return to the negotiating table in order to end such violence. We call on the Government of Israel to fulfil its responsibilities under international law to protect civilians. We call upon the Palestinian Authority to fully ensure that only authorized individuals within defined security forces have access to and are allowed to have weapons, in keeping with that entity's law.

I regret to report that, during the current reporting period, the relative reduction of terrorist attacks was shattered on 29 January by a suicide bombing in Jerusalem that killed 11 and injured at least 50. We must reiterate our utter condemnation of terrorism. No cause can justify such heinous crimes. We urge the Palestinian Authority to take the steps necessary to bring those who plan, facilitate and carry out such attacks to justice.

In the context of this continuing violence and terror, we applaud the Government of Egypt for its continuing and tireless efforts to secure a ceasefire by working with the Palestinian Authority and a variety of Palestinian groups and with Israel. Although no agreement has been reached as yet, efforts continue — ones that, we hope, will soon lead to a full and lasting ceasefire between Israelis and Palestinians.

The conflict exacts a toll on the lives of the people of the region in ways other than violence. The humanitarian situation remains dire in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Continued closures and Israeli military operations hinder Palestinian economic and social activity and cause the Palestinian people to endure daily humiliations. The economic situation is still very poor, with high unemployment and widespread poverty.

However, according to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Palestinian Ministry of Finance, the West Bank economy stabilized in 2003. That is attributed in part to an easing of the most severe measures of closure — notably curfew — combined with the Palestinian population's developing new coping mechanisms. According to those institutions, the West Bank economy grew by 4.5 per cent last year, with a concurrent gain in employment.

While that may seem promising, we must caution that it comes in the context of an economy that had already seriously contracted. In addition, it roughly matches the population growth rate, meaning that per capita income remains constant. However, the

stabilization of the economy underscores that, if closure were eased as part of a peace process, the Palestinian economy could start to recover.

Even with some signs of economic stabilization, the more than $1 billion that donors provide annually must still be used primarily for budgetary support and humanitarian relief. The frustration among donors over the diversion of development aid to humanitarian needs, coupled with the almost daily obstructions that Israeli security measures cause to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, is causing some donors to diminish or curtail their funding programmes.

This attrition of funds to the Palestinian Authority has left it on the verge of bankruptcy — a potentially catastrophic situation, because Palestinian Authority salaries are one of the few means of support for Palestinian families. The insolvency and the resulting chaos that would follow such a collapse would make resolution of the conflict infinitely more difficult and would strengthen the hand of those who would use violence to advance their aims. Only a lifting of the policy of closures, coupled with a continued commitment from donors, will assist the reconstruction and development of the Palestinian economy. However, that development can be put on a sound footing only if the Palestinian Authority continues to make strides in reforming the way it conducts its business and provides space for civil society to flourish.

The area of security is particularly vital. Last week, the Palestinian Authority Cabinet approved a decision to channel Palestinian security personnel salaries directly into bank deposits, which will help make the payment system regulated and transparent. It is of the utmost importance that that decision be implemented without delay. Also, there are continued efforts to overcome the obstacles to unifying the disparate Palestinian Authority security services into one framework under the authority of the Prime Minister. We should all support that goal, towards which Mr. Qurei has been working so assiduously.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continues to face financial difficulties. An increase in calls on UNRWA's resources because of the humanitarian situation, coupled with a lessening of support for the Agency, has brought about a financial crisis that will lead to less support being provided to Palestinian refugees. UNRWA has received less than half of the $196 million that it requested last year to feed some 1.1 million Palestinians, to rebuild destroyed shelters, to create jobs and to provide emergency health services, including counselling for traumatized children. A population of more than 1.5 million refugees relies on those emergency services. UNRWA has now launched a new appeal for $193 million to cover 2004, and we hope the international community will respond generously in view of the urgent needs on the ground. I would like to take this opportunity to remind the Security Council that the United Nations, through UNRWA, runs the bulk of essential social services in the Gaza Strip.

The continued construction of the barrier on Palestinian land, including around Jerusalem, casts a pall over the positive developments I mentioned earlier. As the Secretary-General stated in his report to the General Assembly last November:

> "In the midst of the road map process, when each party should be making good-faith confidence-building measures, the barrier's construction in the West Bank cannot, in this regard, be seen as anything but a deeply counterproductive act". (*A/ES-10/248, para. 29*)

That litany of negatives, coupled with Mr. Sharon's positive announcement on the Gaza Strip withdrawal, highlights the importance of restarting the peace process through the Quartet's road map. We must ensure that its revival does not suffer the fate of the first attempt to implement the road map. Last June, the essential principle of parallelism was abandoned, and a succession of small steps stalled almost immediately.

However, now the parties must take advantage of the opportunity provided by a potential resumption of the peace process based on the Gaza withdrawal initiative. The leaders of both peoples must recommit themselves to peace and must begin to work to fulfil their obligations under the road map. They must understand that there is no alternative plan on the horizon that will relieve them of the responsibility to take difficult and necessary steps.

At the same time, the Quartet must re-engage with the parties and must revitalize its efforts. The parties have shown that they cannot bring about peace on their own. There is too little trust between them to work together effectively without international help. But they need not act on their own. The road map

provides them with a guide to peace backed by a united international community represented by the Quartet.

During this period, the Government of Israel and Hizbullah agreed, through German mediation, to an important prisoner exchange. We congratulate the Federal Republic of Germany on its tireless efforts to broker this humanitarian understanding.

In the last briefing to the Security Council (see S/PV.4895), we noted with great concern the discovery of explosive devices that had again been planted by Hizbullah on the Israeli side of the Blue Line. This development is a blatant violation of Security Council resolutions and poses a risk to lives. It can potentially destabilize the area.

We urge all parties to refrain from any action that could lead to destabilization and call on the Government of Lebanon to establish full control over south Lebanon in order to ensure that international peace and security may prevail. Hizbullah's attack on 19 January on an Israel Defense Forces (IDF) bulldozer attempting to remove one of these devices was a very regrettable and unwarranted escalation, which killed one soldier and injured another. The subsequent IDF air attack on Hizbullah positions in south Lebanon, in which no one was injured, was also regrettable.

Since the last briefing to the Security Council and despite numerous calls for their cessation, Israeli overflights of Lebanese territory have continued. During the reporting period, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) recorded Israeli air violations on at least six different days and anti-aircraft fire by Hizbullah on at least two occasions. One violation does not justify another, but I would like to stress the difference between an overflight and actions that pose obvious mortal risk.

The absence of the requisite governing authority in south Lebanon allows groups that do not share the Government of Lebanon's desire for peace to take actions that jeopardize security throughout the region. I want again to vigorously reiterate both the Secretary-General's and the Security Council's call for the Government of Lebanon to exercise its authority everywhere in southern Lebanon through the activities of the Joint Security Forces and the Lebanese army. I would like to repeat here the Secretary-General's words in his report to the Council last month on UNIFIL: "I urge the Government [of Lebanon] to exert control over the use of force on its entire territory and to prevent all attacks across the Blue Line" (*S/2004/50, para. 28*).

Meanwhile, UNIFIL will continue to contribute to the restoration of peace and security by observing, monitoring and reporting on developments in its area of operation.

I would like to take this opportunity to underline the consistently outstanding and courageous work performed by the officers and soldiers of UNIFIL. In difficult and often dangerous circumstances, they serve the cause of peace with distinction. Under the determined leadership of Major General Lalit Tewari during the past two and a half years, they have risen to every challenge. Last Saturday, General Tewari passed command of UNIFIL over to Major General Alain Pellegrini. I thank General Tewari, a fine officer who upheld the best traditions of the United Nations in working tirelessly to achieve peace.

The situation in the Golan has remained calm since our last report and serves to exemplify how, ultimately, all parties can exercise restraint and work through diplomatic channels to resolve their differences. President Assad's recent overture to resume peace negotiations with Israel is encouraging. We believe that it would be in the interest of peace for Israel to respond positively to this outstretched hand. I truly hope that both parties seize this opportunity to forge a peace agreement, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1515 (2003).

The parties have another chance for peace. The international community has another opportunity to make the road map process work. It behoves us to do everything within our power to make something of these chances. We have repeatedly called in this forum and elsewhere for the parties to take bold steps to build confidence and jump-start the peace process. An Israeli withdrawal from Gaza has the earmarks of such a step. We anxiously await the details and timetable for the withdrawal and urge the Palestinians to meet the plan with meaningful reciprocal confidence-building measures, most imperatively in the area of security.

These actions must be taken with care, but also with some haste. The humanitarian situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip should not be allowed to deteriorate any further. The people of both sides deserve to be free of violence, terror, fear and harassment. Without delay or preconditions, and in keeping with the road map, their leaders should guide

them, with the help of the international community, to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003).

As we enter what could be a dynamic yet potentially confusing time, I wish to remind members of the Council, as they analyse events and statements, of what Cicero once said in a letter to a friend:

> "Unchanging consistency of standpoint has never been considered a virtue in great statesmen. At sea it is good sailing to run before the gale even if the ship cannot make harbour; but if she can make harbour by changing tack, only a fool would risk shipwreck by holding to the original course rather than change it and still reach his destination. Similarly, while all of us as statesmen should set before our eyes the goal of peace with honour ... it is our aim, not our language, which must be always the same."

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Roed-Larsen for his comprehensive briefing.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I should now like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.40 a.m.